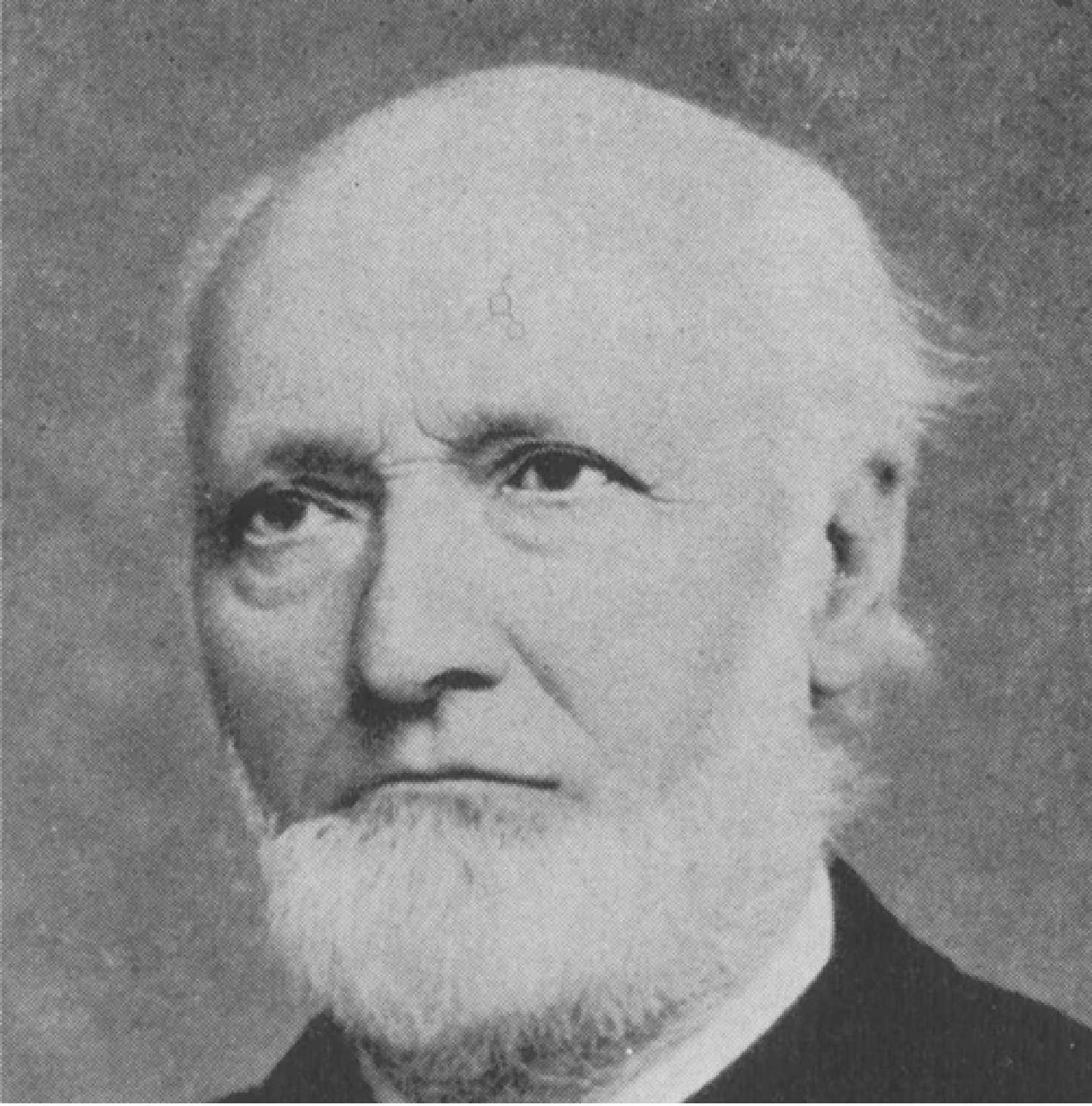

What is Church History?

Philip Schaff

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A

Vindication

Of the idea of

Historical Development

by

Philip Schaff.

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Preface

The essay which is here presented to the theological public, has grown out of an introductory address delivered at the opening of my lectures on church history, last fall, in the seminary with which it is my privilege to be connected as an instructor. From various quarters, a wish has been repeatedly expressed, to have the discourse more extensively made known in a printed form. In complying with this request, it has seemed to me proper and necessary to enlarge it, and to throw it also in some measure into a new shape; so that the address has become a tract.

An exposition of the true nature of church history is undoubtedly needed among us at this time; and might be expected, if at all successful, to be attended with no small practical benefit. There is reason to apprehend, that very few of our theologians in this country have anything like a thorough acquaintance with the history of the church, through all its periods. It is too common, to rest satisfied with that part of it which each one may find to be of immediate practical concern in his own case. The late convert to Popery, *Mr. Newman*, who must be allowed at least to possess some amount of learning, openly acknowledges the great ignorance that prevails in England in relation to the church history in particular of the middle ages: "Our popular religion," he tells us, "scarcely recognises the fact of the twelve long ages which lie between the councils of Nicaea and Trent, except as affording one or two passages to illustrate its wild interpretations of certain prophecies of St. Paul and St. John. It is melancholy to say it, but the chief, perhaps the only English writer, who has any claim to be considered an ecclesiastical historian is the infidel Gibbon." The same may be affirmed of course with equal or with still greater right, of our America. As a general thing, we are too much taken up with the present, to trouble ourselves much about the past. Our religious relations and views are pervaded with the spirit of Puritanism, which is unhistorical in its very constitution, and with which, in fact, a low esteem for history and tradition has itself settled long since into as tyrannical a tradition as is to be met with in any other quarter.

The dry, lifeless style too, in which the study of Church History is conducted in our theological seminaries, must necessarily tend to destroy all satisfaction or interest in its pursuit. Mosheim still holds his place as the infallible authority; though German diligence and learning have long since left him far in the rear. History is still regarded and treated as a mere

- An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine, by John Henry Newman, New York, Appleton, Introd., p. 14.

conglomeration of notices, more or less interesting, thrown together in a perfectly outward way. The body, the outward appearance simply, is considered to be enough. That which constitutes the main thing in history, the ideas which rule it and reveal themselves in the process, imparting to it its only true significance and importance, are too generally disregarded altogether. The conception of an organic development is wanting almost entirely; and yet without this it is not possible ever to come to any right understanding, especially of the history of the church.

This defect in our theology carries with it the most unhappy consequences for our church life, and works powerfully in favour of that ever extending curse of sectarianism under which it has come so deplorably to labour. How shall we labour with any effect to build up the Church, if we have no thorough knowledge of her history, or fail to apprehend it from the proper point of observation? History is, and must ever continue to be, next to God's word, the richest fountain of wisdom, and the surest guide to all successful practical activity. To reject her voice is to rob ourselves of our own right to exist; or, at least, to condemn our own life; since we owe to her, in fact, whether we choose to do so or not, all that we are and all that we can become.

Beyond all question the German theology stands here vastly in advance of the American; and it has seemed to be a matter of some account accordingly, to direct the attention of the inquiring and studious, as I have attempted to do in the first part of my essay, to the mighty achievements in Church History which have taken place lately in this quarter, the more especially as they are as yet so little known, and the whole subject is so much exposed to all sorts of prejudice and misrepresentation. Even *Newman* shows a wretched want of acquaintance with the better productions of modern German historical inquiry, when he allows himself as he does to involve the whole in a summary charge of unbelief.*

If I might only succeed in placing the historical theology of my native land in a more favourable light, and in recommending it to more earnest study, I should feel that an important purpose had been served by the present publication.

I must add here one other remark. The essay is designed only for readers who have some theological culture and an inquiring spirit. This is implied in the very nature of the case; and I should not think it necessary to make the remark, were it not for the experience I have had in the case of my small work on the *Principle of Protestantism*.

- He goes on, namely, in the passage of which a part has already been quoted, to say: "German Protestantism on the other hand has been of a bolder character; it has calmly faced and carefully surveyed the Christianity of eighteen hundred years, and it frankly avows that it is a mere religion of man, and the accident of a period. It considers it a syncretism of various opinions springing up in time and place, and forming such combinations one with another as their respective characters admitted; it considers it as the religion of the childhood of the human mind, and curious to the philosopher as a phenomenon."

We live indeed in a glorious land of liberty and equality. But still this can by no means justify the presumption, with which it is often pretended in this country, in offhand newspaper articles, to pronounce judgment on scientific works, which the self-constituted critics show themselves, by their own enormous superficiality and poverty of mind utterly disqualified for understanding. There are subjects in theology, which the unscientific divine even, has no right to meddle with in this way. Let all things be tried indeed, in order that we may hold fast that which is good; but let it not be in such a case at the bar of the common understanding, where empty self-conceit may feel itself authorized to pass off its smattering of knowledge for true learning, and affect to proscribe as heretical all that may not happen to fit the measure of its own contractedness, with an intolerance equal to any ever exhibited by popery in its darkest period. I ask for readers, at home in some measure in the subject, loving the truth and free from prejudice, who may be willing, to take the trouble of *studying* a book *through*, before they seat themselves on the critic's chair. This methinks is a demand which does no wrong to our republican constitution. The theme of which I have chosen to write is very difficult; and, in spite of all the pains I have taken to treat it in a clear as well as thorough way, it is quite likely that I shall again be subjected to frequent misunderstanding. Even the great *Melancthon* found occasion, from his own painful experience for the remark: Nihil tam simpliciter, tam plane dictum est, unde acuti homines non possint, velut ex eadem cera, mille formas ducere. Still, however, truth cannot fail in the end, to work itself into view from the midst of all perversions, whether well intentioned or malicious; and a storm of opposition even has this good effect among others, that the chaff at times, from which the present tract is by no means supposed to be free, is blown away by its means.

May the small publication contribute something at least, under the blessing of the Lord, towards the solution of one of the most weighty theological questions; and serve especially to encourage and assist my pupils, to whom it is dedicated with heart-felt love, in the prosecution of their studies already commenced in the department of Church History!

The Author.

Mercersburg, April, 1846.

Introduction

The great central theme of the Present, around which all religious and theological movements revolve, is the *Church Question.* This is admitted by the most intelligent and learned men of the age, in the old world as well as in the new. No one can deny it without showing, either that he is destitute of the gift of historical observation, or that he trembles for the existence of his own unchurchly position, and would fain quiet his well grounded fear by a self-illusion.

In proportion, however, as the Church is thus brought into prominent and principal view, her *History* must also become for theologians an object of attention and inquiry. Church and History altogether, since the introduction of Christianity, are so closely united, that respect and love towards the first, may be said to be essentially the same with a proper sense of what is comprised in the other. The Christian Church is itself the greatest fact in the history of the world, by which the ancient order of the life both Jewish and Heathen has been overturned, and the way opened for a new course of existence altogether. It has formed, for eighteen hundred years past, the main stream of the world's history. Almost nothing has since occurred that can be counted great and important, which is not found to stand in nearer or more remote, friendly or hostile, connexion with the Church, and to acquire its true historical significance precisely from this relation. History, on the other hand, is the bearer of the Church; by whose means this last is made to possess a real existence, whereas, under any other form it could be nothing better than a baseless, fantastic abstraction, which for us who are ourselves the product of history, and draw from it all the vigour of our lives, would have no meaning or value whatever.

Whether we look then to the present or the past, we shall find always that true churchmen are ever characterized by their respect for history and a due regard to its authority; while the unchurchly sectarian and rationalist, in their contracted subjectivity, look down with contempt on all that has been wrought out by an earlier time, and make no conscience of profanely dashing it to pieces, as soon as it is found unsuitable to the purposes of their own small trade. The whole destruction process to which the Church has been subjected by Rationalism and Sectarianism, particularly since the beginning of the last century, the classical period of political and religious revolutions, is found joined with the overthrow of all previous History at the same time. So, on the other hand, the glorious work of building up the Church, to which the noblest and best powers of our own age are coming, to be more and

more devoted, stands strikingly associated with a disposition fondly to look after and collect the treasures of past centuries. Interest in the Church and a true reverential regard for History, everywhere and at all times go hand in hand together.

Hence it appears how important it is, in our time especially, to come to a right conception of Church History. It is proposed to contribute something if possible towards this object in the present essay, with a view of recommending the study in a thorough way. We will, in the first place, cast a glance over the latest achievements of German theology in this sphere. This will serve to confirm what has been already said of the close connexion of the church tendency with historical studies, and may perhaps help to open the eyes of some to the wealth and value of the literature of Germany. In the next place, we will endeavour to develope more particularly the modern conception of Church History, as it lies at the ground of the literature to be noticed in the first section. This is the most important part of our task, to which consequently most room must be allowed. Finally, we propose to bring into view the practical bearings of the whole subject on church life and church action.

Section 1.

Survey Of The More Important Recent Performances Of German Theology In The Department Of Church History.

In all the deeper movements of the world of mind, Germany for three hundred years past has taken and led the way of other nations. She is the land that gave birth to those world-embracing ideas, which introduced the Protestant period of the Church, and have wrought such mighty changes in State, Science and Art, and the entire social life of the modern world. In the Reformation, she set in motion the whole course of Protestant history, as it has developed itself from that time to the present. But as Rome was twice the centre of the world's life, while the sword of the Capitol, transplanted with broken point to the dome of St. Peter, ruled western Christendom for a full thousand years; so Germany would appear to be called also to act the second time a world-historical part, in the fact that the spirit of the Reformation, resuscitated under a new form, is just at this time actively engaged on all sides with the work of a vast revolution in theology and the church; a revolution, whose power may be expected in the end, to rule the life of the world, as before, for whole centuries to come.

No reference is had here to the so called "German Catholic movement," which the Protestant religious press of this country, with a most marvellous want of critical discernment, has already trumpeted as a second Reformation. We will not deny that this movement is one of more than common interest, and that it may serve to open the way, in the character of a mere negative condition, to important results. But in itself considered, it is by no means promising. Thus far, in the form it carries at least as connected with the person of Ronge, it has shown itself to be idea-less, destructive and rationalistic; to be regarded as a catholic counterpart to the noise of the Protestants “Friends of Light,” as they call themselves, the struggling remnant of the old Rationalism, instead of being associated in any way with the faith and power of the Reformation. Germany has minds of immeasurably greater depth than any that are connected with this new Catholic movement, although they make immeasurably less noise on the market place of public life. We have here in our eye rather the exploits, as they may be styled, of the later Protestant Theology of Germany. These must make their way in time over the whole cultivated world, and exert a mighty influence on the form and shape that shall be given hereafter to church relations.

Those who measure the importance of all things by their immediately apparent outward consequences, and in whose view nothing is counted eventful but what fills the general popular consciousness with its sound, will be ready, no doubt, to smile at this declaration. Such, however, would do well to consider how they are to get along with Christianity itself,

which was present in history as the great regenerating principle of dying humanity, working silently but powerfully like leaven, long before the central power of the world as it then stood, so much as thought of bestowing upon it the least notice. It has always been peculiar to truly world-historical principles, that they have in the first place dwelt retired in the secret chamber of earnest and profound thought, working from within, from the hidden birth-place of spiritual life, and only after reaching a certain measure of ripeness in this way, have begun to exert a new organizing power on the theatre of the public world.

So it must ever hold. Not outward power, not superficial talk, not the off-hand oracles of the common popular press, but ideas only, (that is, actual single emanations from the primal Truth, which is God himself,) rule in the last instance the History of the World. Shame on the man who dare deny it, and still hold himself for a Christian, that is a believer in an all-comprehending providence. True, ideas may be obstructed and restrained in every sort of way, by rude force. But it is equally certain that the truth at the last will rise again, purified and victorious through martyrdom itself, no more to die, but to see even her bitter foes prostrate at her feet.

From this point of view, our high expectations of the weighty results of German Evangelical Theology and German Philosophy, ought not to be considered fanciful. No one who is thoroughly acquainted with the extended exegetical, critical and historical inquiries, as well as with the philosophical and dogmatic struggles of the last twenty or thirty years, (reaching as they do, to the inmost ground of all things,) can possibly yield to the discouraging thought, that such an extraordinary mass of acuteness, intellect and learning should have been all to no purpose; that the sore spiritual toil of the most gifted and most excellent men of these schools have been absolutely thrown away. It is true that the German theology, in the last century, became more estranged from its proper life-element of religion and the Church, than was the case in other lands. Whilst the Deism of England and the Naturalism of France failed to rise in general above the lowest and most shallow popular free-thinking, the unbelief of Germany formed itself into a scientific system, fortified with a fearful bulwark of learning and philosophy, which because thus immensely more difficult to overcome than in the other case. The German takes so deep an interest in science and religion as such, and is possessed at the same time of such inexhaustible energy and perseverance of mind, that this character proclaims itself even under a false, perverse tendency, and he cannot rest till he has pushed a principle out to its most extreme consequences. But for this very reason again he alone could produce a *scientific* remedy for the disease in question. A large shadow indicates always the presence of a large body. The process could not stop of course content with rationalism. For the Church of God must bid defiance even to the gates of hell. There arose accordingly with the beginning of the present century, and more particularly since the Jubilee of the Reformation, celebrated in the year 1817 in connexion with the false theology of Rationalism, in its different forms, still retaining some portion of its old life, a powerful reaction, which with the keen weapons of the latest scientific cultivation, and the

force of a newly resuscitated religious feeling, carried breach after breach into the system of unbelief, and began once more to build up again the ancient faith with the most diligent zeal. This, however, is not a direct unconditioned return to the earlier stand-point of church theology, over against which rationalism must be allowed to have a certain kind of right: but a living reproduction rather, and for this very reason at the same time an advance. The pure negation of a particular tendency, is never a true victory over it. Only such an opposition can be so considered, which recognises also and saves the element of truth in which the tendency has its life. Thus Christ abolished the law, not by destroying but fulfilling it. So in the case before us Rationalism was not to be simply ignored, but in the hand of that Providence which allows nothing to take place in vain, must serve the purpose of bringing to a new form the old, which in its contracted sphere, (that of the mere understanding,) it had profanely demolished; by which means this might come to a more free activity and full development, and satisfy also what may be called the want that lies at the ground of all rationalism; this, namely, that religious truth shall not be confronted with the subjective spirit in the form of mere outward authority, but become fully reconciled to it in an inward way in the form of conviction and certainty.

Since the different branches of theology form an organic whole, through which streams always one and the same blood, this new spirit must of course make itself felt on all these branches. The Exegesis of the Old and New Testaments, with its various forms of preparatory discipline. Introduction, Archaeology, Hermeneutics and Criticism, has gone forward with huge strides, and seeks now in connexion with religious church interests to satisfy at the same time the requisitions of grammatical and historical knowledge, so one-sidedly regarded by Rationalism, and thus to place the practical object also on a more: Solid scientific basis. Systematic and Philosophical Theology, including Apologetik, Symbolik, Dogmatik and Ethics, has been raised mainly through the influence of the school of Schleiermacher and that of Schelling and Hegel, into a higher stadium of development, in which the speculative spirit struggles to grasp the contents of faith at every point as identical at the same time with the absolute reason. Of the practical disciplines, Homiletics, Liturgik and Church Polity, have been most particularly influenced by this new spirit.

The greatest activity, however, has been expended on Historical Theology, with which alone we are here immediately concerned. The ground of this has been already mentioned. Theology proceeds ever hand in hand with church life. In the classic period of the Greek Church, the great object was to fix in the way of creed the ground doctrines of Christianity, in opposition to the Judaizing and paganizing errors which might be said to reflect the outward persecutions of the church on the part of the State. Hence this period was mainly dogmatic, and the pride of the Greek Church was to be known as orthodox. In the age of the Reformation, the return of the religious spirit to the sacred scriptures, in the way of protest against the authority of tradition which had come to be a fetter upon all free thought, imposed on theologians the duty above all of cultivating biblical exegesis; which accordingly was

prosecuted with wonderful interest and success, while historical and church theology fell into the shade. The theology of the Reformation was more exegetical than speculative. In our days, it is the growing significance of the Church, the interest which is coming to be taken more and more in the Body of Christ as a visible organization, which has called forth such a vast activity in Church History and its several connexions. True, there have been several separate causes which have been felt in the case; such as the jubilee of the Reformation, the "Union," the call for improvement in the psalmody and church service generally, Möhler's assault on Protestantism, the affair of Cologne, the Anglo-Germanic episcopate of Jerusalem, &c.; but these all refer back continually to the deep and ultimate ground now mentioned, and are joined with it in the closest connexion. The church-historical literature of Germany has produced, within the last thirty years, ten times as many volumes as the dogmatic. Winer, in the first supplement to his Manual of Theological Literature, which covers a period of only two years (1839–1841,) notices more than five hundred historical works. If we subtract from this statement one-half, as being either insignificant or destitute of a genuine historical character, there will still remain a very large number. Almost every theologian of any name has devoted a portion at least of his strength to some department of Church History. Besides this, however, it is found to receive the homage of all other departments, Exegesis, Introduction, Ethics, Practical Theology, &c., in this respect at least; that for any work to be complete, it is felt necessary that it should, in the way of introduction, present a history of the subject with which it is employed, and have due regard moreover throughout to views different from its own. Let any one look into any of the later commentaries, by *Bleek, Härtel, Lücke, Tholuck, Steiger, Hengstenberg, Fritzsche, Rüschert,* or among dogmatic works into the systems of *Twesten, Nitzsch, Hase,* the monograph of *Julius Müller* on Sin, and he will soon learn how entirely the whole present theology is pervaded with historical material from beginning to end.

It is now our business to take a general survey of the latest performances of German Theology in the sphere of Church History, and then to set forth their character. We must here distinguish between works that stretch themselves over the whole field, and monographs which devote themselves to particular persons, doctrines or events.

Prominent among the first class, laid out on a large plan, and not yet complete, are the works of *Neander and Gieseler*; both distinguished for their comprehensive and profound learning, but widely different in the spirit by which they are ruled. Gieseler in his own theological views belongs rather to the rationalistic school. The main value of his work also consists not at all in the text, which is indeed concise and clear, but at the same time dry and without spirit. It lies in the full extracts from original sources, that are presented in the way of notes. These are selections with great care, fine judgment, and impartial honesty; and make it possible for the reader who has no access to the sources, to construct a Church History for himself, at least in its leading features, as the truth may be felt to require. Neander on the other hand joins with the most thorough study of authorities, an uncommon religious

amiability and goodness, and a peculiar method of grasping and setting forth his subject, that has won for him the honourable title, “Father of Church History.” We will notice him more particularly hereafter.

Of the other recent works covering the whole field of Church History, I will simply mention only the Manual of *Engelhardt*, in four volumes, which may be recommended for its independent research; and the brief compend of Hase, already in its fourth edition; the principal merits of which are lively representation, compact delineation and description, and a judicious regard to the history of Christian art—merits which only make it the more to be regretted, that the author, thus born to be a historian, should not be more deeply imbued with the element of positive faith and true spiritual earnestness.

We should have, however, a most inadequate conception of German diligence on this field, were we to judge of it solely from such general histories. A far greater activity is presented in the countless monographs, which accompany these works in a supplementary way, augment their material, and modify their method and plan. The general histories can notice particular personalities and tendencies, as they come forward, only as portions of a great whole; whereas the monographs give us a view of them from all sides, and introduce us into those retreats of private life, where the thoughts which have ruled the world were born and trained to maturity.

It would carry us much too far, to attempt here anything like a full enumeration of the works that have appeared under this form recently in the different departments of Church History. The mere titles of books besides can be of no service. Here the word applies, Come and see. He who has come at all to know what these treasures are, must look down with pity on the noisy ignorance, which can allow itself—like the worthy editor of one of our most widely circulated religious journals lately—to deny to Germany a living theology; and what is still worse, is not ashamed to proclaim the poor, stale, reproductions of the worn out theology of New England, still appearing among us, as the culmination of modern science! A few hints on the direction which has been taken by this learned activity within the last twenty years, with some reference to its most prominent productions, will be sufficient for our present purpose.

The historical emulation of the German theologians has exhibited an admirable tact, in the choice of subjects. It has been directed mainly, for instance, to the creative epochs of the Church, and to those individuals in whom a whole age may be said to mirror itself, or rather to concentrate and corporealize its very life. Thus, accordingly, the Greek Church after the fifth century, when with its growing alienation from the Western Church it began to retire always more and more from the theatre of world-history; and again the transition period in the Latin Church between Gregory the Great and Charlemagne; the dark tenth century on to the reformation by Hildebrand; the scholastic period of the Protestant Church; and the time of dissolution embraced in the last century; have all been but little regarded in the way of historical research. Whereas, on the other hand, the age of the fathers, the brilliant period of

the Romano-Germanic Catholicism, from the 12th to the 16th century, and the Reformation, have been illuminated, on all sides with the torch of investigation. Almost all the more important Church fathers stand now embodied and living before our eyes. *Neander*, here also takes the first rank by his monographs on Tertullian and Chrysostom. With respect may be mentioned besides *Semisch's* Justin Martyr, the works of *Thomasius* and *Redepenning* on Origen, *Mohler's* Athanasius the Great, *Ullmann's* Gregory of Nyssa, *Klose's* Basil the Great, *Rittberg's* Cyprian, and the still unfinished work of C. *Biedermann* on the most gifted and influential of all the fathers, Augustine. Add the patristic biographies of *Bohringer*, also in progress. The heretical tendencies of this period also have been handled with immense research, and an impartiality previously unknown; so that it is only now they are coming to be understood, in their true significance especially as concerned with the development of the orthodox theology. We barely specify here the works of *Neander* and *Baur* on Gnosticism, which the older historians were accustomed to regard generally as nothing better than the play of a brainless fancy. In the church polity of the first centuries, *Richard Rothe* has furnished an admirable volume in his "Beginnings of the Christian Church;" a work distinguished for the amazing subtlety of its combinations, often indeed carried too far, and the learning which it brings to bear on the smallest particulars.

Passing on to the bloom period of the Middle Ages, we find, first, the two most important of the popes honoured with special histories; Gregory VII. by *Voigt*, and particularly Innocent III. by the late convert to the Roman Church, *Hurter*; each monograph, written with devotion to its subject and the most comprehensive knowledge of facts, and made to include also the whole to which it belongs. The theology of this period, under its two-folk form of scholasticism and mysticism, related to each other like head and heart, could not of course escape the earnestness of German inquiry. *F. R. Hasse's* Anselm of Canterbury especially deserves notice; of which only the first part has yet made its appearance; exhibiting, after a masterly introduction on the rise and progress of the monastic system, the rich life of the profound theologian and conscientious archbishop in the most attractive style, leaving far behind the previous works of *Mohler* and *Frank*. On the schoolmen of the thirteenth century, also Doctors irrefragabiles, seraphici et subtiles, who represent this tendency at its perfection, Alexander Hales, Thomas Aquinas, Bonaventura, and Duns Scotus, we have yet unfortunately no works answerable to the present state of science; but doubtless we shall not be left now to wait for them much longer. With fond and special partiality on the other hand, has the Mystic School of the middle ages been explored, the native growth of Germany, and the most active agent in preparing the way for the Reformation. Here above all are to be reckoned *Neander's* Bernard of Clairvaux, *Liebner's* Hugo St. Victor, *Engelhardt's* Richard St. Victor and John Ruysbroek, *C. Schmidt's* John Tauler, *Martensen's* Master Eckart. Works on the principal fore-runners of the Reformation, belonging to the fermentation period of the 15th century, are multiplying themselves yearly. Savonarola alone was a few years since made the subject of three different biographies at once, by *Rudelbach*, *F. C. Meier*, and *G.*

Rapp. Of Erasmus we have a very clear portrait, by joining to his Life of *Ad. Müller*, the admirable Review of *Ullmann* in the "Studien and Kritiken" for 1829. The last has exhibited besides, in clear order, all the different preparatory struggles which led the way to the great work of the 16th century, so far as Germany and the Netherlands are concerned, in his truly classic production, "The Reformers before the Reformation."

As for the glorious Reformation itself, the third centennial jubilee of 1817, formed naturally the most powerful inducement and stimulus, to renewed inquiry into its history; calling forth as it did an affectionate yearning towards the Pentecostal days of Protestantism, and a desire for the restoration of the old faith; which *Claus Harms* with his 95 memorable theses, dared at this time to drag from the rubbish in which it had become buried, in the face of all sorts of prevailing error and unbelief. We have been furnished since that date accordingly with works of the highest value on the German and Swiss Reformation; particularly by *Marheinecke*, *Ranke* more recently and *Hagenbuch*, whose lectures are open to a wider public. Nor must we overlook *Ad. Megzel's* History of the Germans, and the Universal History of Leo, which notwithstanding their simply protestant stand-point, serve often to throw light also on the opposite side of the great work and its consequences. *Förstemann*, by the publication of his Original Documents, *Hottinger* and *Vögeli* by giving the world *H. Bullinger's* History of the Reformation, *Bretschneider* by his comprehensive Corpus Reformatorum have laid the student of history under special obligations. As a matter of course, the Reformers themselves have been subjected to the most full representation. So we have within the last few years, *Henry's* Life of Calvin, *Herzog's* Oecolampadius, *Galle's* Characteristics of Melancthon, *Baum's* Theodore Beza; all works, which as a rich collection of materials at least, though somewhat defective it may be in historical skill, must take an honourable rank in modern theological literature. It is to be lamented that, with all this activity the Reformation in France, the Netherlands, England, and Scotland, has been handled thus far in a most step-motherly way. It may be trusted however that *Merle D'Aubigne*, who belongs properly as a historian to the German school, will be able to fill up here many a chasm by his learned investigations, for which such special advantage is secured to him by the libraries of Geneva and Paris, and his personal acquaintance now, also, with England and Scotland.

On the Protestantism of the 17th and 18th centuries, as before intimated, fewer works have appeared. Still we have some right excellent monographs on single prominent persons; as on Valentine Andreae and Spener by *Hossbach*, on Paul Gerhardt, by *Wildenhahn*, on A. H. Franke by *Guericke*, on Zinzendorf by *Varnhagen von Ense*. The English Revolution has been recently handled by *Dahlmann*, though chiefly in a political point of view; the English deism thoroughly and completely by *Lechler*. The present church state of England and Scotland, through the establishment of the Anglo-Prussian Episcopate, the Scotch Secession, and the mission of the Russian preachers *Gerlach, Sydow, Uhden,* in 1842 has been brought, by means of several valuable publications, much nearer to the Germans than before. Among

these may be mentioned in particular, "The state of the Anglican Church" by Uhden; "Church Affairs in Great Britain" by *Sydow*, the first volume of which contains a thorough view of the Secession of in Scotland; and "The Church of Scotland" by *Sack* of Bonn. For the post-reformation history of Romanism finally, a new sense also has awakened, and a new field thrown open, especially by Ranke's Popes of the 16th and 17th centuries, and *H. Reuchlin's* History of the Port Royal and Life of Pascal.

Along with historical persons and tendencies, the doctrines of the church are at this time also the object of special attention in the same way. Here again to works covering the whole field, such as those of *Münscher, Engelhardt, Baumgarten-Crusius* and *Hagenbach,* must be joined monographs and pursue a single dogma through the several stages of its development. In this line, the Hegelian school has undoubtedly done important service; proceeding as it does throughout, on the view that all spiritual life is a process, always carried forward with immanent necessity; the only basis on which there can be any true force in the idea of dogmatic history. *Baur* of Tübingen has handled in this way the doctrine of the Atonement in one volume, and the doctrine of the Trinity, together with that of the Incarnation, in three volumes of large size. His splendid learning and boundless power of combination would be of more value for theology, if he were less enslaved to the Hegelian formalism; which finds no meaning in doctrines except in their scientific relations, and runs them out continually into more and more attenuated forms, till at last they are made to dissolve into sheer abstractions. Of a different character is *Dorner's* excellent Christology, and the History of the Doctrine of the Trinity by *G. A. Meier,* which has only quite lately appeared. With the Hegelian theory of development, which needs essential modification in various respects to satisfy the Christian consciousness, is found conjoined in these works a living sense of religion, and a true church spirit, which govern the scientific investigation at all points, and thus conduct it to much more satisfactory results, than any that are possible on mere Hegelian ground.

As before said, this survey is necessarily very incomplete. Several sections of historical theology, such as the history of missions, the history of worship, &c., I have left altogether untouched; nor has any notice been taken of the almost countless essays, many of them for the professional theologian invaluable, which have appeared simply in theological Journals, such as *Ilgen's* Zeitschrift for historical theology, and the Studien und Kritiken by *Ullmann* and *Umbreit.* Enough has been said, however, to give some notion of the wonderful zeal, with which the German mind of the present day is exploring the gold and silver mines of the past. There are scribblers possibly in this country, where such a tendency prevails to look selfishly to the present, and to weigh all things by the standard of immediate utility, to whom all this may seem no better than labour thrown away, an occasion for ridicule rather than respect. We leave such to their humour; reminding them simply that the man who undertakes to work for the future without the knowledge of the past and constant regard to it, will build most certainly a castle in the air, which the lightest wind will be sufficient to blow down again—as many striking examples in our American Church life serve clearly to show.

When now we consider these performances only in an outward way, we must be struck immediately by the spirit of *catholicity* they display; which rising high above the interest of a mere party or confession, spreads itself out with almost equal love over all spheres of Church History, from the days of the apostles down to our own time, and recognises the traces of the divine Spirit, the footsteps of the Lord of the Church, in all ages and among all nations. History is no longer handled in that merely apologetic style, that requires it to lend itself as an instrument to the service of an established system, and to take always such an aspect as this object may require. It presents itself to the inquiring mind as a region full of wealth and attraction, that deserves to be explored for its own sake. It carries in itself such a weight of truth and experience, that it is only by means of it, in the first place, the subjective spirit can raise itself at all to an independent stand-point; and must have need, always afterwards also, to enlarge and correct its views from the lessons here exhibited, and so make them bend to its own pleasure.

With this catholicity is joined of course an *impartiality* and *freedom from prejudice,* of which the merely apologetic style of history is not capable. This can see only light and truth on its own side; on the side of its opponent, darkness and falsehood. The truly catholic historian, on the other hand, has too exalted an idea of truth, to think of confining it to the narrow horizon of an individual or a party. He sees light and darkness every where distributed over the vast picture which he unrolls to our view, and measures every time and every character, not by a foreign standard, but by one that is drawn from its own nature and its own relations. Even heretical and schismatic tendencies are not set down by him as of purely arbitrary growth. He allows to them rather, so soon as they are found to have become, in fact, world-historical, by some determining influence on the course of the church, a certain sort of right, an element of truth and necessity, the traces of which are to be discerned in the development of the orthodox church itself. Aiming at truth only, he will not shrink from uttering censure, even where it falls himself and the stand-point of his own confession; and will be equally ready to speak well of an opposite interest, where right may happen to be on its side. For this very reason, such impartiality is not to be confounded with mere indifferentism. This is absolutely unjustifiable, and disqualifies a man for writing history altogether. He that begins by holding all religions and confessions in like value, will soon end by holding them to be alike without any value. In opposition to such indifference, the true church historian must have a decided character and take a decided stand; but only for the truth, honouring this whenever and wherever it may come in his way.

A further peculiarity of the modern Church History discloses itself to us, on a close consideration of foregoing literature, in the purely scientific spirit with which it is conducted. It is something more than outward mechanical weaving together of facts and figures, without regard to the inward life, the proper world-pulse, so to speak, which alone gives meaning and worth to the whole. Happily, too, that poor pragmatism of the last century is surmounted, which had come in the end to make account only of subjective factors in history, the

affections and passions, namely, of the human heart; and supposed itself to be on the inmost track of events, when it could refer them to motives and springs of this sort. Now, the historical material is taken as a dead mass pervaded with spirit. Investigation is carried back to the most remote and scarcely perceptible beginnings of the object contemplated; which is then allowed to unfold itself from within according to the law of its own nature and constitution, on to its proper maturity. The forms of the past are invoked from their graves, and made to walk and act before us in flesh and blood: events are reproduced, and all is brought in this way to put on the character of a true breathing life. And what is thus made to pass before our eyes, is not the play of unmeaning blind forces. All is conducted by a higher spirit, which urges on the wheel of history, turns even the passions and errors of men to its own service, and through all events bears the world continually towards the glorious end established for it in the eternal counsel of God. Only in this way finally can Church History come to its true interest and significance. Only in this way can it ever be rightly studied or fairly understood.

All this, and much that might be mentioned besides, in the character of the modern literature now under consideration, indicates that the whole theological stand-point of Church History has been changed. The science plainly has advanced to a new position. Into the nature of this, after the preliminary sketch just given, it is our business now more closely to inquire.

Section 2.

Development of the Idea of Church History.

Christian Theology is scientific knowledge of the Triune God, as he has revealed himself in Christ, and still continues to manifest his presence in the church. This revelation is deposited for all times and for every people, pure and perfect, in the covenant records of our religion, the Old and New Testaments. Theology must begin then by being exegetical. *Exegesis*, or as it is sometimes styled *Biblical Literature,* may be called also *Fundamental Theology*. It has to do with the incipient form of Christianity, and comprehends the exposition of the sacred scriptures as a whole. Its way is prepared by the precursory studies. Biblical Hermeneutics, Criticism, Archaeology, and Introduction to the Old and New Testaments. It finds its natural conclusion in Biblical Theology, according to the technical sense of this term; that is, in the reduction of the collective results of exegesis, to a connected, logically arranged system of Biblical history, doctrine and morality. This forms the natural starting point for the second great theological discipline. The revelation of the Triune God remains not bound in the mere letter of the Bible, but passes over continually more and more into the form of spirit and life, communicating itself like leaven to the mass of humanity, and gradually transforming it into its own image. This process from the close of the New Testament canon on to the present time, it is the business of Historical Theology, or Church History, faithfully to represent. It has respect throughout only to the past. Having reached the present, it makes room for *Systematic* or *Philosophical Theology;* to which must be reckoned particularly Dogmatik and Ethics, and as some will have it Apologetik also, and Polemik and Statistik. This unfolds for the understanding the present posture of the church, with faith and life, and exhibits always her latest scientific self-consciousness, or in other words the religious spirit of the age. Here it is not enough to furnish an objective representation simply, as in the case of exegetical and historical theology, the subjective conviction, the entire religious faith and judgment of the theologian himself, and his church connexion, must come into view. Systematic theology has no sooner come to exist, than it becomes itself again an object of historical theology; as the present is always falling over to the past. Out of the knowledge of the past and present, however, a church future also comes now into view. Hence a fourth discipline, in which theology as Practical has for its object the proper application of this knowledge to the further advancement of the church; so that what has been learned may be wrought again into new life. This is to be done, partly by the preaching of the gospel; partly by the religious instruction of the young; partly by the administration of the liturgical portions of divine worship, psalmody, prayer, confession and the sacraments; partly for the pastoral care strictly so called; and partly also by the conduct of ecclesiastical affairs on the part of those to whom

this trust may belong. To these different methods of advancing and extending the life of the church are found answering the particular branches of practical theology, Homiletik, Catechetik, Liturgik, Pastoral Care, and Church Government. Arrived at this point, the science has returned again to its beginning; since the main instrument of its practical activity in the church, must be the same divine scriptures that form the object of exegetical inquiry at the start.

Thus have we assigned to Church History its proper organic place, in the general system of theology. Admitting the superior importance of exegesis it is found to be by far the most comprehensive of all theological studies. The birth-day of its subject, the Christian Church, on the first Pentecost (Acts ii. 1), forms its starting point; or if it be preferred, the incarnation itself, so as to include the life of Jesus also in its range. The present, at any given time, constitutes its relative end. Its material, however, must go on to increase unceasingly, till all historical development shall come to a close with the end of the world or last judgment. Within these two poles, it comprehends all that can occur, of any importance for the kingdom of God, whether of an internal or external character.

Before proceeding to a more particular exposition of the idea of Church History, it may be well to bestow a preliminary glance first upon the nature of the Church itself, and then upon history in general.

The Church, in its broad sense, and as manifested in the world, is composed of all who have been baptized into Christ, whether they be nominal Christians only or real. This, according to long traditional Protestant designation, is the visible, or better, the mixed Church. In a narrower sense, however, and according to its inward and theoretical character, the religious, spiritual and real communion of all true believers in Christ. This is the invisible or more correctly the pure Church; for it may also be seen and recognised in distinct expressions of life; only no one can know of particular individuals with absolute certainty, whether they are truly united to Christ or not. The visible Church is made up of different confessions, which in part hold a perfectly hostile relation to each other, as Catholics, Greeks, Protestants, &c. The invisible or true Church, on the other hand, is always one only; although her members are scattered in different sections of the visible Church. She is the truth, the pure substance, the quintessence as it were of all visible organizations. She exists thus, as long as she continues militant upon the earth, always within the visible Church;* is for this reason constantly associated with unworthy, openly unbelieving or hypocritical members; and cannot be delivered from this connexion before the end of the world. The two communions act together and influence each other continually; so that history must always keep both in view. Only an infallible man would be prepared to write the history of the pure Church, and even such an one must still have respect to the Church in a wider sense, to make his work a true and faithful life representation of its subject.

The true, pure, or invisible Church is made up of men, and bears throughout a true human character. It is not, however, for this reason the product of men, but, as indicated even by its

name,* it stands before us as a purely supernatural organization. Viewed under this objective ideal aspect, it may be defined according to its origin and end, as an institution established by God through Christ for the glory of his own name and the salvation of men. It is the bearer of all God's revelations, the channel of Christianity, the depository of all the life powers of the Redeemer, the habitation of the Holy Ghost. The apostle Paul styles it in several places the body of Jesus Christ, and calls believers the members of this body.* His meaning in this is, that Christ dwells in the Church as an organic unity of different personalities and powers, as the soul in the body ; and that he acts through it as his organ, just as our soul by means of the body shows itself active and exerts an influence upon the world.

Paul's doctrine of the Church, in this view, rests on the supposition of the real presence of Christ with his people. This was promised to his disciples, and so to the Church which they represented, by the Lord himself. "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them," (Matthew 28:20) "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world," (28:20) He says not simply, My Spirit, or My consolation or My truth, is with you always; but *I* that is, *my whole person, in which divinity and humanity are inseparably joined together.* We must admit then the presence of the Redeemer in the Church invisible and supernatural of course, but none the less real and efficient on this account in his whole undivided and indivisible glorified personality, with all the powers that belong to it, whether as human or divine.

But does not Christ then, since his ascension to heaven, sit at the right hand of God, from whence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead? Over against a rude contracted exegesis, which unhappily is too often to be met with still even on the part of educated theologians, especially on the sacramental question, it might be enough to answer simply, By all means! The right hand of God, however, is not bound to a particular place; and in any case is not to be taken literally, but denotes his Almighty power, as it upholds and fills the whole universe. When we pray to our Father in heaven, we do not hereby deny his presence upon the earth, nor conceive of him as in the strict sense seated upon a throne in some definite locality above us. This would be indeed a most crass and fleshly notion of God, the omnipresent absolute Spirit.

- Single instances of such as have died in faith before they could be baptized, and so received into the visible Church, as the thief upon the cross, are to be counted exceptions merely, that as such serve to establish the rule. The old Church maxin holds here: Noi defectus, sed contemptus sacramenti damnat.
- From κυριακον sc. δωμα or κυριακη sc. οικια, Dominica, as Basilica from βασιλευς, Regia from rex. The word has passed from the Greek, by means of the Gothic, into all the German dialects, the Swedish Kyrka, the Danish Kyrke, the English Church, &c. Others with less probability derive it from the old German kiesen or kieren, in which case it would correspond with the Greek εκκλησια, in the sense of the called or chosen (of the Lord) electa. The name denotes sometimes the edifice, sometimes the assembled congregation, sometimes, as we take it here, the organic complex of all congregations. It involves always, however, a reference to the divine origin and divine intention of the Church.
- Romans 12:5, 1st Corinthians 6:15, 12:27, Ephesians 4:12, Colossians 1:24

At the same time, however, as it regards Christ, we have to make a distinction psychologically allowable, between his individual and generic character; in order to harmonize different scriptural statements, and to solve especially the difficulties, which connect themselves for the understanding with the doctrine of the Lord's Supper, the standing seal and pledge of the real presence of Christ in the Church. We say, then, Christ as that particular human individual who formerly moved through Palestine, a man among other men, is no longer upon the earth certainly, not even in his glorified form, and will only appear again when he shall return to judge the world. Of course, there is no room, according to our view, to think of any participation of his individual body, as such, in the eucharist, or of any corporeal reception whatever, whether in the way of transubstantiation or consubstantiation. But Christ is not merely a single man among other men; he bears at the same time a universal character; as the Saviour of the world, he is the representative of the whole race. Hence, the evangelist says (John 1:14) not ὁ λόγος ἄνθρωπος ἐγένετο, which would denote merely a human individual, but σὰρξ ἐγένετο; to show that he assumed humanity, or the general human nature. The designation, υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, so frequently applied to himself by our Lord, involves probably the idea, that he was to be regarded as the ideal man, in whom the conception of the human race as a whole was fully actualized, and from whom as the source of a new creation all regenerated life among men was to spring. This undoubtedly is the doctrine of the Apostle Paul, when at different times, (Romans 5:12, 1st Corinthians 15:21, 45) he draws a parallel between Christ and the first man, and styles him the second Adam. Christ bears the same relation to regenerate humanity or the Church that is borne by Adam to humanity in its natural, fallen and as such dying character. They have both a typical significance; each standing as a head to the whole race. Sin and death came into the world by Adam, righteousness and life by Jesus Christ Ὁ πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος ἐκ γῆς χοϊκός, ὁ δεύτερος ἄνθρωπος ὁ κύριος ἐξ οὐρανοῦ. Ὅιος ὁ χοϊκός, τοιοῦτοι καὶ οἱ χοϊκοί· καὶ ὅιος ὁ ἐπουράνιος, τοιοῦτοι καὶ οἱ ἐπουράνιοι· καὶ καθώς ἐφορέσαμεν τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ χοϊκοῦ, φορέσομεν καὶ τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ ἐπουρανίου, (1st Corinthians 15:47-49)

We partake thus of the spiritual and corporeal nature of Adam, truly and properly, although his individual being, as a particular body and particular soul, passes not over into our persons. We are of his race, we have part in the general qualities of his being, as well as in his sinfulness and mortality. His individual person has been withdrawn from the world; but his generic existence is still present really and substantially, though not under a specific local form, perpetuates itself from generation to generation, and forms, so to speak, the root of the natural tree of humanity, from which the vital sap flows continually into all its particular branches.

Only on the ground of such an organic conception of the relation of Adam to his posterity, can the church doctrine of Original Sin and its Imputation have any rational sense.* And so also it is only on the supposition of the indwelling of the incarnate Word in the Church, a life intimate, or rather far more intimate mystical life union of Christ with believers,

- Dr. Nevin has done well to press this parallel of Paul, his well known articles on *Pseudo-protestantism*, for his view of the Lord's Supper. There can be no doubt for one properly acquainted with the history of the Reformation, that Calvin, and the whole Reformed Church in its most important symbols, which were all formed under the influence of Calvin, much more than that of Zwingli, held a real participation in the eucharist by faith, not only of the merit, but of the flesh and blood, that is of the human nature of Christ. To the known passages from Calvin's Institutes, and his Controversy with Westphal I will here add one less familiar, which is particularly clear. It is to be found in the *Confessio fidei de Eucharistia*, signed by Calvin, Farel, Viret, Bucer, and Capito, in the year 1537. It is there said: Vitam spiritualem, quam nobis Christus largitur non in eo duntaxat sitam esse confitemur, quod Spiritusuo nos vivificat, sed quod Spiritus etiam sui virtute carnis suae vivificae nos facit participes, qua participatione in vitam aeternam pascamur. Itaque cum de communione, quam cum Christo fideles habent, loquimur, non minus carni et sanguini ejus communicare ipsos intelligimus quam spiritui, ut ita totum Christum possideant. At the same time, the Reformed symbols decidedly reject the idea of a local presence of Christ’s body, which in this form is in heaven only; and Calvin endeavours to solve the contradiction that seems to lie in the idea of communicating with an absent object, by assuming that through the supernatural power of the Holy Ghost, in the case of believers, the soul is so raised by faith to heaven as to come within the life-giving influence of the Saviour’s body. This however is not properly to remove the difficulty, but only to transfer it to another place; yea it is made worse, since it is easier to conceive of the power of Christ’s body extending itself by the Holy Ghost down to the earth, than that our souls should be in two places at the same time. Plainly, the Reformers were not willing on the one hand to let go the exegetical significance of the Lord’s supper, and it must be allowed they preserved it in substance; while, on the other hand, they were anxious not to wrong the Biblical declarations with regard to Christ’s ascension, sitting at the right hand of God, and returning to judge the world, by assuming any such presence as might seem to overthrow these for the understanding. The scientific union of these two points they did not reach; and it is just here accordingly that the eucharistic doctrine of the Reformers needs to be carried forward to a more complete form. This seems to me to be secured by the distinction, which both scripture and philosophy sanction, between the individual body of Christ now enthroned in heaven, and the generic virtue of his human nature as actively present by the Holy Ghost in the entire church.

that the cardinal doctrines of the Atonement, the Imputation of Christ's merit, and Justification through faith, can be successfully maintained against Socinian and Rationalistic objections. The Son of God became man, not for his own sake, but for ours; and for us he still continues man in eternity. His humanity then must avail to our advantage: only by means of it, can we be permanently united with the divine nature. Only through our participation in its imperishable vitality, is the power of sin and death within us gradually eradicated, and a new glorified body, which shall be like his own, prepared for our use. All other religions aim at the reconciliation of man with God. But they either fail to reach this object altogether, or at most it is secured imperfectly, as in the case of Judaism, in the way of prolepsis or shadowy anticipation of Christianity itself. The relation which holds in them between founder and follower is merely moral, such as we acknowledge towards the Reformers and Church Fathers. The specific character of Christianity, on the contrary, consists in this, that it is the full reconciliation and enduring life union of man with God, centring in the person of Jesus Christ. The life of Christ, which is neither simply divine nor simply human, but divine-human, flows over by the different means of grace to believers so that, as far as their new nature reaches, they do not live themselves, but Christ lives in them, (Genesis 2:20) The Old Testament saints could not be said to be *in Moses* or *in Elias* Of believers under the new dispensation, however, Paul says, continually, they are in Christ, that is in living union with him.

All this involves the uninterrupted presence of Christ, the God-man, in and among his people. His absence would rob us of the root of our religious existence from which all living sap is derived into the branches. The branch would be separated from the vine, and must of necessity wither (John 15:6) the stream would be cut off from its fountain, and must accordingly fail. Only as the Church has part in the life of the God-man, does she stand upon a rock against which the gates of hell shall not be able to prevail (Matthew 16:18) "Because I live, ye shall live also. At that day, ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you" (John 14:19, 20) In the Church, Christ carries forward, so to speak, his divine human life, heals the sick, wakes the dead to a new existence, takes even young children into his arms by baptism, gives believers his atoning flesh and blood to partake of in the Lord's supper, speaks by his word and ministers comfort, peace and blessing to all that seek his grace, is crucified anew by the hostile world in the persecutions of his people, but still repeats also his glorious resurrection and ascension, and continues evermore to visit his little flock, assembled with one accord for prayer, with the fullness of light and life by his Holy Spirit.

A right conception of the Church is indispensable for a living apprehension and satisfactory exhibition of its history. This is itself indeed, in one respect, the product of a thorough insight into its actual development, the result of deep exegetical and historical study; but in another respect, it is the *spiritus rector,* the conducting genius of the Church historian. The relation here is that of reciprocal light and confirmation. Only the art which has wrought with master

hand the wondrous dome of Church history, furnishes at the same time the key for understanding it. Without its guidance, we see indeed the solemn earnest halls, the lofty walls, and gigantic towers; but we cannot understand their deep symbolic meaning, the high and vast ideas that have taken body in their external forms. Hence it is that such works on Church History as those of *Engelhardt* and *Gieseler,* for instance, however distinguished and valuable for their thorough learning, still leave the deepest theological want unsatisfied, as having no true idea of the Church.* It is to be regretted that with Neander, also, this idea comes less clearly and distinctly into view, than one could wish, especially now when the Church forms the life question of the time. *Guericke*, who borrows so slavishly and for a man of learning so very unbecomingly from *Neander* in other respects, shows himself independent of him here at least, that he is possessed of a strong church feeling; though under a very one-sided and exclusive form, since the idea of the true Church is for him identical with Lutheranism and the Form of Concord.

Let us now come to some right understanding, before we go further, on the nature of *History*. The term denotes in its objective sense the general course of events; subjectively, the representation of these events. This definition, however, requires to be made more particular, so soon as History comes to be handled as a science. Only that can be called *historical*, strictly speaking, which has exercised a determining influence upon the progress of humanity, and which has become incorporated with the image of its life at any given time. Thus, for example, the appearance of Luther at Worms is in an eminent sense historical, and in truth world-historical; while his domestic and private movements, though having the character of events, are only so far historical, as they may serve to illustrate and explain his importance for the Church, his character as a Reformer.

As every single individual has his history, so has humanity also as a whole. Its biography is Universal or World History. Revelation and enlightened reason teach us, to look upon the human race as a single family, which has sprung from one and the same common ancestor, and tends towards the same end, the exhibition of God’s glory. Hence the history of the world must be conducted also as a living organism, in which the irresistible onward movement of humanity towards this end, the struggle of centuries to actualize in full the deep meaning of life, may be fairly represented. The historical particular nations form the members of this organic body; through which, under all difference of character, and calling, and position, and circumstances, one life blood still flows, and in which the idea of humanity, as formed from God and for God, dwells as a single soul.

All nations however are not historical, any more than all individuals; but only such as have made themselves felt in a living way upon the actual development, inward and outward, of the world’s life as a whole.

- Comp. R. Hasse's Review of Engelhardt's Manuel of Church History, in the Berl. Jahrb. für wissensch Kritik, 1835, Bd. I. S. 543

The Hottentots, Caffrarians, Negroes and New Zealanders, for instance, have thus far played no part whatever in the grand drama of history. Paganism in general, since the introduction of Christianity, is to be regarded as material merely, which must be Christianized in the first place, before it can fall into the stream of historical development; like the child, which has not yet come to years of responsibility, and can take no position of its own accordingly in human society.

As nations which have come to free action, and individuals that reciprocally complete one another, form thus the factors of world-history, so we are to recognise in different periods the several stadia, inwardly connected and flowing necessarily one out of another, through which the idea of humanity must proceed, in order to come always to a more complete realization and exhibition of its own nature. Every period has a distinct character, which is impressed more or less on all its movements and tendencies. This is denominated the spirit of the age. It is nothing more than the world spirit, or the spirit of humanity itself, at a particular point of its age. For humanity, like the single man of which it is organically composed, passes through the stages of childhood, earlier and later youth, and manhood, onwards to old age. In a general way, we may style the history of the Oriental world, where the nations still stand wholly under the rod of the absolute power, the childhood and boyhood of our race; Greece, the land of freedom, sprightliness and fancy, its youth; Rome, full of calculation and action, its manhood; and the period since Christianity, its old age, as surpassing in reason and wisdom all its previous life. At the same time, every period and every people has also its several ages of life through which to pass; and then we must say again that Christianity, as such, includes a new course of development, peculiar to itself and essentially different from all that went before. Religion in this form is not to be viewed as an advance simply upon the Jewish system, exalting it to a higher state. It must be regarded rather as a new creation, by which a new principle, a divine life is communicated to humanity itself. Christianity forms the turning point of the world's history; and Christ, the true pole star of the whole is the centre also around which all revolves; the key, as the great historian John von Müller towards the close of his life expressed himself, which alone can unlock the sense of all that has taken place before his advent or since. In Christ, the ideal of humanity has been actualized. All history before him must be viewed as a preparation for his presence; a preparation, which in Judaism carried a positive character, in the way of progressive revelations and condescensions on the part of God; while in Paganism it was more negative, a helpless struggle upwards on the part of man. All history since Christ, finds its central movement in the development of the divine principle of life, which he has introduced into human nature, and which is destined gradually to take all up into its own element, as revealed in his person. In this view it becomes *Church History.* We are now to consider more closely the idea of Church History itself. In this, there are very different views. The principal of these, as measured by their historical significance, we proceed to examine. Church history itself, like every other theological discipline, has its own history; having reached the high position it

now occupies, only by degrees, and through a series of imperfect efforts, previously put forth for the purpose. We distinguish, in its course of development, three periods. The first two stand related to each other as extremes. By surmounting both, in the way of a true reconciliation, that higher view has come to prevail, which enters clearly into the ground of all the more important works of modern German science in this department.

The Orthodox Historiography.

As the fact goes always before its representation, so it was necessary for the Church to act and form material, before there could be any history of it in the subjective sense. The first and most incomplete form of ecclesiastical history, was the simple record of the recollections, which the Church had of its past doings and fortunes — brought together usually in a mere outward way, in their chronological order. Such chronicles and annals constitute, down to the time of the reformation, almost the only attempts that were made in the way of historical representation; of immense value, of course, as collections of material; but still no more than attempts at history, we may say, as consisting of such collections only. Church History as a science commences, where the Church comes to reflect upon herself; where the historian brings his own judgment into his work, and represents his matter, so as to put life into it spiritually, from some particular point of view. The first stand-point which presents itself to us here, is that of the earlier *orthodoxy*, as well Roman Catholic as Protestant. We may style it the stand-point of *established orthodoxy,* (der fertigen orthodoxie,) and *exclusive ecclesiasticism.** It consists in general, in this, that the Church, with her whole system of doctrine and life, is regarded as something complete from the start; and is thus made to stand, under some particular received visible form in abstract opposition to all diverging sects, as the absolute and only legitimate representative of the Christian faith. Outward changes in the fortunes of the Church, by its growth in the way of missionary activity and aggression upon the world, are of course admitted; but all idea of an inward development of the nature of the Church itself, is rejected. This general maxim, however, must assume practically, a different form in the Roman Catholic consciousness, from what is found to be in the Protestant If any system may be said to have become what it is historically, this must be affirmed of the Roman Catholic, both as it regards its outward form and its inward constitution.

- I may remark here, and I place no particular weight either on this designation, or on the designations employed in the case of the other two stand-points, as there is no authority, so far as my knowledge extends, requiring their use. If any can be furnished more significant and comprehensive, they will be cheerfully adopted.

The Roman Catholic Method of History.

What an immense distance between the Galilean fisherman, who as a common presbyter (1st Peter 5:1) not as a lord over the flock but as its example (verse 3) travels from place to place, in poor raiment, accompanied by his wife, (1 Corinthians 9:5) to proclaim the simple word of the cross to the Jews and Gentiles: and a Gregory VII. with his unyielding hierarchic pride, and his inexorable anathemas directed against all married priests as whoremongers and adulterers; or an Innocent III, who arrayed in gorgeous pontifical attire, and bearing the triple crown upon his head, reverently encompassed with different patriarchs, seventy-one metropolitans and superior prelates, four hundred and twelve bishops, nine hundred abbots and priors, the lights of learning, and the ambassadors of almost all the princes of Europe, at the fourth Lateran Council, as the holy and infallible father of the whole family of Christian nations, orders with dictatorial spirit all the affairs of the Church, whether outward or inward, decrees a crusade against the Saracens, and treats the most powerful kings of the earth as mere vassals, who hold their crowns in fief from him as the vicegerent of Christ upon the earth! How much labour of the deepest thinkers, what changes, yea, contradictions in opinion, what devices and circuitous courses of religious thought, lie between the extremely simple and indefinite doctrinal views of the apostolical fathers and apologists of the second and third centuries, and the wonderful scholastic system of the Middle Ages, carried out in the most insignificant subtleties in the way of question, distinction and division, or the symbolical settlement of its main results in the Concilium Tridentinum! Through what struggles of centuries, through what diseases, relapses and recoveries, was it not necessary for the monastic institution to pass, before it could work its way upwards from the renowned poverty of the hermit Anthony in the Libyan desert, to the mighty orders which embraced and ruled all Western Christendom, in the thirteenth century! What a chasm, what conflicts of the principle of image worship with the principle of image war, between the simple, almost puritanic worship of the time of the apostles, and the outwardly imposing, mysterious pomp of the mediæval religious service!

All this, for the unprejudiced view, is something more than merely outward change, in the case of which the interior state might be supposed to remain always the same. Notwithstanding this, however, the Roman Catholic historians down to the time of *Stolberg, Ritter,* and *Döllinger,* maintain in substance the principle of stability; with this difference only, that the more recent and liberal among them have been forced to yield more or less to the powerful pressure of Protestant criticism, at least in subordinate points, in the sphere particularly of the utterly untenable fables of the hierarchy. All that has come at any time to general authority in the papacy, having impressed upon it thus the seal of the infallible church, is referred to an immediately divine origin; found partly in the Bible, and partly in an oral tradition claiming to be derived from the apostles, on the maxim of Vincentius Lirinensis, understood in an outward and literal way: Teneamus, quod semper, quod ubique,

quod ab omnibus creditum est. The Council of Trent expresses the fullest conviction, that all its decisions, doctrinal and moral, were drawn through the medium of an uninterrupted succession of bishops from the very time of the apostles.

According to this assumption, for instance, the declaration of Christ to Peter, Matthew 16:18, and the delivery to him of the keys of the kingdom of heaven, contain in themselves the full idea of the papacy. When the Lord says, "He that eateth of this *bread* shall live for ever," (John 6:51—58) when Paul separates the cup from the bread by an or, (1st Corinthians 11:27) when Luke mentions of the first Christians with approbation, that they continued steadfastly in "the breaking of bread," without any notice of the cup; this all is enough of itself to justify communion in one kind. In the imposition of hands by Paul and John, after previous baptism in the case of the Samaritan converts (Acts 8:16-17), is found the actual sacrament of confirmation; in the remarkable passage (Ephesians 5:25—32), the sacrament of marriage; in the casual direction of James to anoint a sick brother with oil, (4:14), the sacrament of extreme unction; in the remark of our Lord on voluntary eunuchs (Matthew 19:12), and Paul's wish that all might be like himself as regards marriage (1st Corinthians 7:7), the celibacy of the clergy as a divine ordinance. When historical testimonies are wanting altogether, the strict Romanists find a convenient refuge in the veil of *disciplina arcani;* according to which, certain apostolical doctrines and practices, which are first mentioned and ecclesiastically established at a later period, are supposed for various reasons, as the fear for example of profanation on the part of Jews and Pagans, or a tender regard to the weakness of catechumens, to have been originally kept secret. When, finally, clear testimonies speak directly against them; as, for instance, when pope *Gelasius,* of the fifth century, expressly affirms that the nature of the bread and wine remains in the eucharist, or where pope *Nicholas I,* of the ninth century, in his second letter to the emperor Michael, teaches the true presence of Christ's body in this sacrament, without transmutation; these zealous historians and dogmatists do violence both to the subject and themselves, by calling in question the genuineness of the documents thus brought into view.

If the Roman Catholic doctrine and discipline have been at all times the same, they must remain the same also for all time to come. Were the entire structure of the Church regarded only as the product of a necessary historical process, having a right humanly to be what it has

- Sacrosancta œcumenica et generalis Trid. Synodus, perspiciens, hanc veritatem et disciplinam contineri in libris scriptis et sine scripto traditionibus, quæ ab ipsius Christo ore ab Apostolis acceptæ, aut ab ipsis Apostolis Spiritu S. dictante quasi per manus traditæ ad nos usque pervenerunt—traditiones ipsas—tanquam vel oretenus a Christo vel a Sp. S. dictatas et continua successione in Ecclesia catholica conservatas, pari pietatis affectu ac venerantia suscipit et veneratur. Sess. iv. dec. 1. This principle is repeated often in the case of single doctrines, as, S. xii. c. 4, xiii. c. 8, xiv. c. 5, xxi. c. 9, &c.

been in its own time, it would not be so bad. But the jus humanum is made to pass here always for a jus divinum, the jus historicum for a just absolutum. What has once been acknowledged by the Church, is constituted a law obligatory for all time.

So far as the sects are concerned, the historical theory now before us reserves to the Catholic, that is to the Roman Church, the exclusive possession of God's truth and Spirit, as being invested in fact with the attribute of infallibility. All tendencies that set themselves in opposition to its authority, including of course the whole interest of Protestantism with all its mighty achievements, are regarded as heretical and schismatical, the working of Satanic wickedness against the divine will itself. As such, they exclude all hope of salvation. Extra ecclesiam Romanum, nulla salus. They are not allowed even the merit of having assisted the orthodox Church, in coming to a clear consciousness of her own vocation, and in bringing her dogmas to proper perfection for the understanding. They are made to be the outward occasion only, by which the Church has been led to utter in the way of formal decree against the manifestation of heresy, what she had held materially in its full completeness from the beginning.*

- I may be permitted here, to say a word at least in the form of a note, on the late publication of John Henry Newman: “An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine, New York, Appleton & Co. 1846.” It is in defence of the long expected and entirely natural transition he has made recently to the Roman Catholic Church. The very title seems to contradict what we have here given as the character of the Romanist view of history. He holds, in fact, a certain kind of development in the Church, and maintains the same in his late Catholic theologians, De Maistre and Möhler on his side. So far as this goes, it forms a concession in favour of Protestant science, and involves, to the same extent, a departure from the strict sense of Romanist principle. It is doubtful, accordingly, whether it will be sustained by theologians in this Church. Professor Butler, in a late article in the Irish Ecclesiastical Journal (N. Y. Churchman, Feb. 14th, 1846), remarks on this point: “I must in the first place observe that it is much more than doubtful, how far Mr. Newman’s doctrine is at all the received doctrine of the Roman Church, or would be regarded by its authorities as any other than a most perilous innovation. Convenient as it may now be to tolerate it, (or anything else from the same author,) for temporary purposes, and to meet the present state of speculation, I shall be much surprised, if, as the controversy proceeds, it be not in substance disavowed as a private and unauthorized hypothesis.” The reviewer then appeals to a judgment of the Sorbonne, and to various declarations of the Council of Trent, in which the principle of stability is asserted in the most unqualified terms.
  Still, however, Mr. Newman’s conception of development is not so perilous for Rome as the mere name might imply, and differs very materially from ours. For, in the first place, he allows this development to hold only in the Roman Catholic direction; so that Protestantism is regarded as falling away from history, and of course an abiding corruption. Then again, with his view of the infallibility of the Church, every Roman Catholic development is for him of force for all time; whilst we can see in the papacy, for instance, only a temporary form of church government, necessary for the wants of a particular period. Finally, in the application of his principle to concrete points, he still approximates again to the Romanist stand-point; since the slightest and most indistinct hints of Christian antiquity are taken as sufficient proofs by themselves for the existence at the later period of doctrines and practices that belong to a much later period; thus at bottom referring all again to apostolical or with

Historical Method of the Older Protestant Orthodoxy.

The Reformation had from its commencement properly a practical character, but still sustained and carried throughout by the power of ideas. It included then necessarily a regeneration in full of theology which is only the form in which the life of religion is brought to scientific consciousness. The science was emancipated from the chains of the scholastic philosophy, and referred to the formal principle of Protestantism, the holy scriptures as the living fountain and only rule of all saving divine knowledge. This brought into the foreground, the interpretation of the Bible; which now acquired, through *Luther, Melancthon, Camerarius, Zwingli, Oecolampadius,* and still more through *Calvin* and *Beza,* an impulse, a force and vigour, freshness and life, depth and fulness of spirit, which cast into the shade not only the sparse performances of the Middle Ages in this department, but even the whole Patristic period itself. On this biblical ground arose a renovated Dogmatik, whose most brilliant incomparable monuments are presented to us, in *Melancthon's* Loci Theologici, and Institutes of the Christian Religion of *Calvin.* By reason of the organic connexion among all branches of theology, Church History was required also to undergo a change, as soon as the Protestant principle came to be applied to this department. This took place towards the end of the age of the Reformation itself, primarily in the "Magdeburg Centuries" and the "Catalogus Testium Veritatis," by *Flacius.* In the period immediately following, the Lutheran Church was more occupied with dogmatic, than with exegetical and historical studies; still a certain view of Church History lay at the ground of the school divinity of the age, which is extensively interwoven with all its representations of Christian doctrine. The Reformed theologians, on the other hand, besides giving their attention to the interpretation of the scriptures, employed themselves in a number of cases with particular portions of Church History, chiefly in a controversial way; and produced accordingly, in the course of the period here noticed, many works, which, for the learning of their details, and their critical acumen, carry with them in part at least a permanent value.

> different expression to divine authority. Romanism cannot give up the principle of stability without unsettling its own foundations. The broad difference between our view of the development of the church, and that presented by Mr. Newman, will be made to appear more clearly as we proceed. Meanwhile, it were to be wished, that the book in question might be subjected to a separate review of a more earnest character than it is likely to receive among us at this time. Too many of our critics, in their immense Protestant self-complacency, to which all is clear and settled long ago as regards the whole subject, are utterly disqualified for every task of this kind.

The most celebrated names on this list are, among the French, *De Plessis, Morney, Pierre du Moulin, Jean Daille (Dallæs,) Dav. Blondel, Saumaise (Salmasius,)* the two *Basnages;* among the English *Usher, Pearson, Beveridge, Burnet, Dodwell, Bingham, Bull, Cave,* and *Grabe.* Of histories bearing a general character may be named particularly those by *J. Hottinger, Spanheim, J. Basnage, Jablonsky, Turretin,* and *Venema.*

The emancipation, however, from the Roman stand-point was accomplished only by degrees. It was changed as to material, in the first place, but remained formally the same; so that it is to be comprehended still under the same general view. We shall now attempt to characterize somewhat more particularly, this orthodox protestant method of history.

In the first place, the conception of the Church became more broad and spiritual. It was no longer identified with the communion of Rome. Elements of evangelical truth and Christian life, were recognised in the sects also of the Middle Ages, which were the object of Rome's severe persecution. It was generally admitted indeed that the Lord had at all times reserved a people for himself, even under the dominion of the pope; but what might be called Roman properly in the Catholic Church, the papacy with its institutions was regarded as an apostasy from the true church, towards which the posture of a simply negative criticism was accordingly maintained. After the Reformation it was no longer possible to look upon the Roman as the absolutely true church. It took the character of a heresy, a sort of hardened Judaism; whilst to Protestantism was now assigned the place, which had been previously claimed by Rome.

Notwithstanding this material change, however, the church continued to be for these historians also something complete in its nature from the beginning, not needing nor admitting any proper development. All activity in the sphere of doctrine, was apprehended only under the form either of a vindication or denial of the truth, as orthodoxy or heresy. The orthodox was the stable, always agreeing with itself; the heretical appeared as the subject of perpetual change; so that the history of doctrines resolved itself at last into a mere history of heresies. The apostolical fathers and early Christian apologists already exhibited the full system of truth in a pure form; the general councils established it symbolically in opposition to different heresies; the papacy overwhelmed it with unscriptural and superstitious traditions. Still it was always present beneath this rubbish, as gold covered with dross, and was brought more or less into view by the so-called "witnesses of the truth," the *Waldenses, Wickliffe, Huss, John Wessel, &*c., till the Reformation finally raised it again to ecclesiastical authority. In this view, accordingly, the great religious movement of the 16th century itself forms no proper advance of church life and consciousness, but a simple process of purification, a return to the original truth of the scriptures and the stand-point of the first few centuries. The entire Protestant system was supposed to be found immediately and literally in the Bible, even in the Old Testament itself, and in the practice and life of the first period of the Church; so that the whole intermediate history was made to sink in fact into the character of an unmeaning and useless episode. While the Reformers always laid great weight on the

agreement of their views with *Jerome, Augustine, Cyprian, Athanasius,* &c., their followers of the 17th century went still further. The English Episcopalians, in particular, made it their business, to establish a perfect identity between the primitive Church and their own. In this effort they showed themselves often more unhistorical, and less favourable to the idea of development, than even the Romanists themselves. So, for example, the learned *Dr. George Bull,* in his celebrated Defence of the Nicene Creed, undertakes to show that the ante-Nicene fathers taught in full all that this creed contains, and that all differences which appear in the case are formal only, not affecting the substance at any point.* The distinguished Jesuit *Dionysius Petavius* was sufficiently free from prejudice not to deny absolutely the fact of some difference of doctrine in this period; and indeed went so far as to allow even that the Arian heresy itself had appeared among the earlier forms of thinking in the Church. For this, however, *Bull* blames him strongly, and thinks that such a concession must overthrow the respect which is due to the fathers, and give the Church a right also to form new dogmas. As it regards government and worship, the more liberal among the earlier Protestant historians, have indeed acknowledged changes, even within the true Church; but then they look upon these as the accidental rise and disappearance merely of indifferent ceremonies. At the same time, there have not been wanting those among the Reformed, to whom the Presbyterian system has seemed fully identical with the constitution of the Church as it stood in the days of the Apostles and the age of Clemens Romanus; as indeed such are to be met with still. So Protestant Episcopalians have found their three orders in the same way, directly in the New Testament; yea, Lutherans even failed not to appear in the 17th and 18th centuries, who believed,

- Defensio Fidei Nicænæ, etc. ed. Grabe, London, 1703. Prooem. p. 5: Scilicet hic operis et incepti nostri scopus, hoc institutum est ut clare ostendamus, quod de Filii divinitate contra Arium aliosque hæreticos statuerunt Patres Nicæni, idem reipsa, (quam aliis fortasse nonnunquam verbis loquendi modo,) docuisse Patres ac Doctores ecclesiæ probati ad unum omnes, qui ante tempora Synodi Nicænæ ab ipsa usque apostolorum ætate floruerunt.
  De Theol. Dogmatibus. De Trinit. I. 5, 7 and 8. In this, however, other Catholic theologians decidedly differ from Petavius. Thus, according to *Klee,* the approximation of the earlier apologists to Tritheism or Subordinationism is merely apparent, and to be accounted for satisfactorily from the imperfection of human language, generally and of the theological language of this period in particular (*Lehrb. der Dogmengeschichte, Mainz,* 1837, Th. i. S. 162.) Passages that sound like subordination in Origen, he charges to the account of some unknown forger. (S. 166, comp. S. 192.)

that they could very satisfactorily establish the Consistorial and Territorial order of their government churches from the Old Testament!

The view taken also of the relation between the reigning Church and dissenting bodies, remained formally the same that it had been before in the Roman Catholic conception of history; namely, that of exclusive ecclesiasticism. Tendencies and views which appeared in opposition to the established church doctrines, were not brought into any inward connexion with the historical life of the Church itself, but were set over against it abstractly, as purely negative phenomena. Here, however, this principle fell into a striking self-contradiction in its application. In the first period of the Church, it went hand in hand with the Romanist view; since Protestantism, in its orthodox character, acknowledged the authority of the œcumenical symbols. Of course it condemned and rejected the heresies of Ebionism, Gnosticism, Montanism, Subordinationism, Sabellianism, Arianism, Semi-arianism, Manicheism, Nestorianism, Eutychianism, Pelagianism, and Semi-pelagianism, as decidedly as the Church of Rome, denying them in the same way all right to exist. On into the sixth century, we may say, the two systems moved thus together.

But the case changed in the Middle Ages; where the Roman became always more and more clearly the reigning Church, under the papacy, which stood in direct antagonism to the Reformation. Here the Protestant historians were constrained to take side rather with the non-catholic sects, the so called forerunners of the Reformation, and so to make these “testes veritatis” properly the Catholic Church itself in its true sense, in order to maintain some consistency with their previous rule of judgment. But this was attended with great difficulties. For in the first place the Middle Ages are only the regular development of the Catholic Church of the first six centuries. All the germs even of the papacy itself may be shown to have existed, dispersed indeed throughout orthodoxy, it is plain, apprehended the church fathers only on one side. Augustine, for example, has full as much objective, churchly, catholic feeling, as what may be called subjective and protestant in his character. Yea, he is the principal former of the Catholicism of the Middle Ages; his deep feeling lies at the ground of its mystic theology, as his dialectic understanding animates the scholastic. His spirit makes its presence first through the whole period of the Catholic Church, till at length the Reformers rose to interpret its Protestant element, as comprehended in his doctrine of sin and grace. How can the great veneration of the Roman Church for this father be explained, except on the ground of an actual inward affinity with his spirit, in some view?

A second difficulty appears in the fact, that a large proportion of the sects which existed before the Reformation, were further removed in a number of points from the Protestant orthodoxy, than the errors even of the Church of Rome itself. Zealous Reformed theologians spared no pains, indeed, to clear the anti-hierarchic bodies of the Middle Ages from all reproach of heresy. Anti-papistic and evangelical were taken to be almost interchangeable terms.

Thus, for instance, *James Usher* and *John Paul Perrin* would force the world to believe, at every cost, that the *Albigenses* were entirely pure and sound in their faith, and that the accusation of Manicheism must be considered as groundless calumnies brought against them by the papists. The Catholic historians, particularly Bossuet, defended, with much spirit and learning, the earlier opinion. A vigorous controversy was now waged on the subject; till the publication of the judicial Records of the Inquisition of Toulouse, by *Philip Limborch*, compelled the parties to relinquish early on this their claim of the documents clearly distinguishing the *Albigenses* from the *Waldenses,* and attribute to the first, the error of the Manichean dualism. Thus, the matter stood before the appearance of *Mosheim.**

Finally, such Protestants as had carried their studies somewhat thoroughly into the Catholic theology of the Middle Ages, could not, with all their respect for the dissenting sects, shut their eyes to the fact, that at least as much piety as they could exhibit, and a great deal more learning, had place also in the reigning Church. This was especially evident in the persons of such men as *Anselm of Canterbury, Bernard of Clairvaux, Thomas Aquinas,* and *Thomas a Kempis.* For these men a traditional reverence still continued to make itself felt in spite of their connexion with the papacy. Yea, with the Lutheran theologians of the 17th century, who notwithstanding the opposition of the Reformers, formed themselves a new scholastic divinity, *Thomas Aquinas* came even to be honoured with the title of an assertor *veritatis evangelicae.* It is now allowed, however, by all who understand the subject, that this great divine has exerted, next to Augustine, more influence than any other on the formation of the Roman system, so far as its doctrinal side is concerned.

When we come down to the period after the Reformation, we find the state of things more favourable again to the application of the historical principle before us. There was now a predominant orthodox Protestant Church, and over against it dissenting men and parties, as during the first centuries, in relation to the Catholic Church. Here then the Lutheran Church in particular conducted itself with great harshness towards all movements of the more free kind, even when connected with forms so worthy of respect as *Arndt, Jacob Böhme, Calixtus,* and afterwards *Spener* and *Francke;* treating them as dangerous heretics, and rivalling Rome herself in exclusiveness. But here also this rigoristic ecclesiastical standpoint could not long be maintained; especially after Pietism had grown into a powerful tendency, and the orthodox themselves were compelled to acknowledge its influence.

- See his judgment with regard to this controversy, in his *Versuch ener unparteiischen und gründlichen Ketzerge-schichte. Helmstadt,* 1746. *Einleitung,* s. 28 ff

Thus, through the pressure of the difficulties and self-contradictions which have been mentioned, as well as by the continued process of development on the part of orthodox theology itself, there was gradually formed in the Lutheran Church, during the course of the 18th century, a sort of mediating view or moderate orthodoxy; which we may look upon as the transition to the second principal stadium in the progress of our science, though it still belongs in the main to the first. This is the *supra-rationalistic* view of Church History. It belongs chiefly to the German Lutheran Church, and has produced the most important works that Protestant orthodoxy has to show in this sphere. Here are to be reckoned those eminent names of the last century, *Weismann, J. C. Walch, C. W. F. Walch, Baumgarten, Kramer, Mosheim, Schröckh;* historians, indeed, who for their intellectual ability, unwearied diligence and solid learning, must always remain in honourable and grateful memory. Mosheim, take him altogether, is without question the greatest among them. He unites in himself the powers of historical inquiry and historical representation, in a high degree. Whilst others generally appear in the tedious, dry address, and antiquated tasteless style of the foregoing century, Mosheim's manner of writing, both in German and Latin, is pure, flowing, graphic and pleasant.* Along with this he has the advantage of general culture, a wide and full knowledge of men, and great power of description and illustration. In short, he has performed all that it was possible to perform in his time. Honour to his memory! Surely however he would himself be surprised, and as a historian especially must be filled even with displeasure, if he should now return again to the earth, and find the English and Americans, after the lapse of a full century, not a step advanced beyond his position, and contenting themselves, in their seminaries, to commit his textbook to memory, in a mere mechanical way, so far as practical purposes may require. He would bestow, beyond doubt, far greater praise on his German countrymen, who have placed his immortal labours at large interest, and would be able thus to show him his capital doubled and tripled in its amount.

It remains now to notice some of the characteristic features of this supranaturalistic method of history.

The term supranaturalism is employed, in the historical sense of the word, to designate the last representatives of the old protestant orthodoxy, as opposed to Pietism, and still more to Rationalism, by which the theology of Germany was gradually overpowered during the last century. Against this powerful enemy, the established school divinity became always less and less able to maintain with decision its church character; all was brought thus into a sickly decline, in which the

- *Gustavus Schwab* styles him in this respect "the father of modern pulpit eloquence, and as regards tact, force and taste, the first former of the German conversational language of the 18th century." (German Prose from Mosheim to our time. Stuttgart, 1843.)

main truths of Christianity indeed were still retained, but at the same time the scientific principle of rationalism was admitted, and along with it a strong tendency to unchurchly subjectivity. Thus supranaturalism stood between two powers, in the case of which neology soon gained the ascendency. It was found insufficient to withstand permanently the stream of the age, lost continually more and more its church character, and capitulated finally with the foe with which it had undertaken to wage perpetual war. This whole process can be clearly traced, not only in the systematic divinity and exegesis of the period in question, but also in its style of Church History.

The supranaturalistic historians agree with their strict orthodox predecessors in this, that the conception of development is wanting to them altogether. They look upon the process of history simply as a course or series of favourable and unfavourable events; and the exhibition of it is considered to be, not a living reproduction or generic evolution, but a simple relation merely, of these events as they have occurred.* The Christian doctrines and precepts are viewed by them as a fixed unalterable system, standing over against the human mind in an outward way, as handed down in the Bible, under the same form always, from the beginning.

On the other hand a difference appears in this, that the old orthodox zeal against deviations in doctrine from the church theology, whether of the patristic or protestant period, is very considerably cooled; particularly after the pious *Arnold*, of whom we shall have more to say presently, allowed himself to treat with some tender indulgence, while so many instances of wrong were shown to have had place on the part of the orthodox. The supranaturalists affected the credit of great liberality and impartiality; which must by all means be allowed to them also, in a certain sense. They no longer looked upon heresies as being the product exclusively of bad intention, and rebellion directly against the divine authority; but rather as errors of thought or imagination, in many cases at least, that called for pity, various forms of enthusiasm, such, for instance, as Gnosticism, Montanism and Mysticism. Or they treated them as deviations merely from the church terminology, and so reduced not infrequently the most weighty doctrinal controversies to unmeaning logomachies. Or lastly they justified the heretics in part, in opposition to the orthodox.* In this, however, they assailed their own assumption, that heresy must be regarded as sheer falsehood, which of course can never have any right in opposition to divine truth. To close the eyes then indulgently in favour of the falsehood, could not fail to promote a spirit of indifference in relation to true and false, orthodoxy and heterodoxy, of very dangerous character. This did, in fact, towards the close of the century, become generally prevalent; so that it became an easy thing for Rationalism, with its growing strength, to overcome so poor an enemy, and even to bring it over to its own side. The last and most extensive work of Church History from this lenient and pliant school, namely, that of *Schröckh* with its continuation by *Tzschirner*, reveals in its five and forty volumes, which appeared from 1768 to 1810, the gradual progress of the latitudinarianism here noticed, as it fell over always more and more towards the rationalistic camp.

- *Mosheim* defines church history to be a perspicua et sincera narratio, &c., (*Inst. Hist. Eccl. Helmst.* 1755, *preparatio* § 1.,) and again a prudens et ingenua narratio, (*Inst. Hist. Christ. Helmst.* 1739, Sec. 1, Prep., § 1.) He divides it accordingly into *external* and *internal* (p. 2 in both works), and the first again into a *narratio factorum* prosperorum et adversorum (§ 3.) Plainly a most mechanical and outward method, which shows at once an utter want of the conception of an organic development.
- *Mosheim expresses himself very mildly in relation to heretics in general. Non exigus sane laboris (his hereticis sum) fructus est, si sapienter et sine perturbatione instituta; verum arduus idem et molestus est. Nam factionum duces multis injuriis temere objecti sunt, et ipsa eorum dogmata depravata. Quapropter qui ad hanc historiam partem accedunt, candidum omnino et aequabilem animum debent secum quoque cogitare debent, generaliori tantum sensu adsumi pro homine, qui bellis et dissidiis inter Christianos, sive sua sive aliena culpa, occasionem praebuit.*
  Inst. Hist. Eccles. Prop. § 11, p. 5. As a striking example of these concessions in favour of heretics, may be adduced the learned monograph of Mosheim on the Unitarian, Michael Servetus, whose burning was approved even by the gentle Melanchthon himself. We see, here, how the supranaturalism of this period had deviated in its method of history, from the original strictness of Protestant orthodoxy. In the comparison which Mosheim draws between Calvin and Servetus, this last comes off nearly as well as the first. “I venture,” says the writer, “to append to this sketch, a brief parallel of the unfortunate Spanish physician and his great antagonist, John Calvin. In this, I mean not to put reproach on the last, nor honour on the first. One who is orthodox is not made a heretic, by being compared with a heretic; and a worthy man loses none of his merit, though it be shown that his opponent has not been wholly unlike himself. Calvin and Servetus were both extraordinary and remarkable men. The first was far more serviceable to the Church than the last; but both were actuated alike by the same fiery zeal in this direction. Both burned with an inextinguishable desire to purify the Lord’s congregation, to overthrow the papacy, to destroy superstition, to restore banished truth, and to lift up prostrate piety, &c.” He closes the representation thus: “Calvin and Servetus, with all their infirmities, were both sincerely pious. This is shown by their end. They both died as the righteous, whom no accusations of conscience trouble. Servetus acknowledged, before his execution, the wrong he had done to Calvin; and Calvin also repented, before his death, of the faults he had committed towards Servetus. Charity hopeth all things. Should it give offence to suppose that God has shown his grace to both souls, for the sake of that Jesus on whom they called in death? It is a supposition, at all events, that does no wrong to truth. It is an infirmity of charity, which charity will readily overlook.”
  Ketzergeschichte, Helmst. 1748, Buch ii. § 39, s. 254 f.

The Rationalistic Historiography.

The second stand-point of ecclesiastical history may be styled, in opposition to that of the old orthodoxy, the stand-point of *fluctuating heterodoxy* and *unchurchly subjectivity* This also, however, does not appear at once in its complete character, but has again its own historical process. In this we must distinguish two periods, the *Pietistic* and the proper *Rationalistic,* to which last the distinction just given, becomes first fully applicable. The two differ widely in their views; more we may say perhaps than even the Roman Catholic and Protestant Orthodoxy. The Pietistic school stands in close connexion with inward subjective piety, as it came to a reaction in the 17th century against the dead orthodoxy of the Lutheran Church, though continuing to hold still, in the main, the same system of faith, and to reject also the idea of all doctrinal movement or progress. Rationalism, on the contrary, sets itself in hostile array against the substance of the orthodox theory, and against Christianity itself, reducing it to the character of a mutable and transient system. Both tendencies, however, the pietistic and the rationalistic, come together in the point of unchurchliness, and this sufficiently explains to us the transition of the first over into the last, as its proper and natural theoretic consequence.

The Pietistic Method of History, or That of Sectarian Religious Separation.

George Calixtus had already, in several historical publications, taken a more liberal course than was common among his orthodox contemporaries. Instead of dividing light and shade regularly between a particular section of the visible church and all differing communions, he sought rather in love to find elements of truth and unity in all confessions. He was, however, cried down by the church zealots, and for a long time thrust out of sight entirely. Still he had not lived in vain. His irenical theology, directed towards practical and essential points, came forward again, with the close of the 17th century, and the beginning of the next, under a somewhat modified form. In opposition to the congealed church character and petrified orthodoxy of Lutheranism, stood forth from the bosom of practical religion the Pietism of *Spener* and *Franke;* as in England previously we find Puritanism rebelling against the lifeless forms which had come to prevail in the Episcopal Church Pietism, of the same mind here with the United Brethren and the Methodists, made very little account of doctrine, theology, theoretic Christianity. Its concern was all for practical religion, the exhibition of faith in action. This was, however, as one-sided as the opposite extreme of overvaluing theoretic orthodoxy. Pietism accordingly soon furnished historical proof, that a practical religion which rests on no solid knowledge of truth, and is indifferent towards the church, must lose all its energy, fall into false ways, and at last, contrary to its original design, make common cause even with unbelief. In the sphere of history, this form of thinking would of course try

the worth of every person and church by the standard of subjective piety; and as this, in many cases at least, must appear to prevail among the oppressed sects rather than with the reigning church, a different view would naturally come to be taken of the relation of the church to the sects, from that which lies at the ground of the old orthodoxy.

This we find exemplified in the celebrated History of the pious and learned *Gottfried Arnold* who belongs properly to this pietistic school.* He had the enormous courage to reverse outright the orthodox principle of history, by which the Church is held to be always in the right against the sects, vindicating to these last all *religious life,* and so of course all true *historical legitimacy* at the same time. Some basis for this method had been furnished, it is true, by the orthodox Protestant mode of handling the Middle Ages, where the cause of the Waldenses, Wickliffites, Hussites, &c., was espoused against the ruling church. But the extension of the principle to the first six centuries also, and to the period subsequent to the Reformation, could not fail to revolutionize the form of Church History completely.
As Pietism had been in every way mishandled, persecuted and slandered, by the church orthodoxy to which it stood opposed, it is easy to see how a mind like that of *Arnold* might come to the thought: the reigning church, in which so little living piety is to be found, and by which indeed it is treated with bitter hostility, cannot possibly be the bride of Christ. It is peculiar to this rather to appear without show, small, poor, gentle, and loving, and to be mocked and crucified always by the ruling powers of the world. So it was in the first three centuries; the period of persecution called forth the richest blossoms of piety.

- Unparteiische Kirchen und Ketzerhistorie, von Anfang des Neuen Testaments bis auf das Jahr Christi, 1688, in 4 Theilen. Zuerst erschienen zu Frankfurt a. M., 1699 und 1700.

  Characteristic in this view is the following passage which I extract from the Preface, § 30 and 31. Its general style, slovenly and destitute of all taste, marks well the spirit of the age to which it belongs. Many may perhaps bring forward again the common objection: our dear mother the Christian Church ought not to die so speedily, seeing she has had so much to suffer already before. To this I reply, that it is hard for the inexperienced to see which of those outward church societies is to be counted the true church, as every one according to his own fancy and interest will have the religion to be meant hereby into which he has happened himself to be born. Besides, it is not a scriptural expression of opinion, that the church is a mother. The scriptures know only of one single mother of all saints, which is the Jerusalem above, Galat. iv. 26, Heb. xii. 22. They have never given those godless pretenders, and much less the apostate clergy, liberty to call her a mother, and in this way to intrench and secure themselves against all testimony, admonition, and improvement. The true, pure congregation of the Lord has been from the beginning of the gospel and the times of the apostles, a virgin and bride of Christ. But the false apostate church, according to the testimony of the first teachers and the report hereafter to follow in this history, has become a harlot; and by means of the miscellaneous and incongruous introduction of all hypocrites and wicked, under Constantine the Great, as also by the natural increase and propagation of false Christians, has given birth to millions of bastards, with whom no true members of Christ will have any thing to do."

Arnold's view properly is this, that there was a perfectly pure church only in connexion with the apostles, and that no particular church since can be said to be the only true one. Truth and error are according to him everywhere, though not in the same relative proportions. The most truth, it is to be assumed, is found where we have the largest amount of piety; and this, he believed, was to be placed to the credit of the sects.

As *Arnold* made religious life the measure of the true Church, and acknowledged this only as it appeared in the form of subjective piety, it was very easy to apply his principle to particular cases, especially when it came to controversies within the Lutheran Church itself, and thus to put to shame the one-sided exclusiveness of orthodoxy. To carry out his maxim, however, with full consistency, he was compelled to employ the greatest violence and perversion of facts, as have been proved against him with convincing force by his orthodox contemporaries *Faustking, Cyprian, Godwins, Löscher, Veiel, Wächter* and others.* His depreciating judgments with regard to many of the greatest and most pious men of the Church, as well as his extravagant laudations of the sects and heretics, are often truly disgusting.

Then again *Arnold* fell into a palpable self-contradiction. He was himself orthodox as it regards the essential doctrines of the gospel, and in opposition to the charges of heresy brought against him, expressly declared his faith to be that of the Lutheran Church.* It must be plain, however, to any attentive reader, even of Arnold's Church History itself, that the fundamental truths of the gospel, during the first six centuries, and in the period following the Reformation, were altogether more faithfully maintained by the reigning church, than by the sects; and that these last, with all their religious life and their zeal for some particular elements of the evangelical doctrine, were infected in part at least, with errors, which left even those of the Roman Church far in the rear. Let any one call to mind only the Ebionites, Gnostics, Manichæans, Socinians, Anabaptists, Quakers, &c. Altogether, moreover, the whole view of history exhibited by Arnold is adapted to make a most uncomfortable impression, and to serve powerfully the cause of skepticism; which calls in question, if not the existence, at least the success of any divine plan in history. We need not wonder then, that the founder of Pietism himself,

- An ample collection of literature, for the learned professional historian, of great interest and value, in favour of this pietistic stand-point and against it, may be found in the third volume of the Schaff hausen edition of Arnold's History, 1742.
- See particularly his declaration in the second edition of his work just noticed, Part ii. Sect. 2, p. 500, where among other things, he says: "I profess freely and without constraint, that I greatly and dearly prize Luther's doctrine and testimony, as well against the anti-christianity of the corrupt clergy, as in favour of the genuine way of the gospel. Yea, I find this old pure theology and religion to be best in practice for life, and in harmony with the true gospel, which he has again brought forth into view, out of the holy scriptures, and those witnesses of the truth and mystics, particularly Tauler and the German Theology, and asserted it against the schoolmen."

the excellent and venerable Spener, was by no means satisfied with the work of his friend.*

The Rationalistic Method of History.

It is easy to see, that Arnold's view of history, as soon as it was admitted to be just, could not fail to shake the credit of the reigning Church in favour of the dissenting sects; nay, to bring its whole existence itself into question. Only the personal piety of Arnold kept him from surrendering himself to a perfectly destructive tendency. The time soon appeared, when not merely the life, but the faith and orthodoxy also of the predominant church were assailed, and the heresies of the sects taken under protection. As Pietism in general, by its comparatively anti-church character, prepared the way for Rationalism, so the work of Arnold served to make room for the stand-point of rationalistic history.

The principle of dissenting subjectivity had now put itself forward, and claimed to be regarded as the legitimate historical force. This required only the loss of that basis of religious feeling, which Pietism still inherited from the church out of which it drew its fresh life, in order to fall over necessarily to Rationalism. The work of *Arnold* falling in as it did with the tendency of the age, found a favourable response in many quarters, during his own life-time; as for instance with the great jurist *Thomasius*, who, in a negative respect at least made common cause with the Pietists, in opposition to the reigning church.* As the term "orthodox" was brought into discredit by the first, so also was the word "catholic" by this last, who applied it to every ecclesiastical regulation that did not happen to suit his taste. It became in Germany a proverb even to denote a desperate business, of any sort: "That is to become catholic." With this bug-bear many a wound has since been inflicted on the Lord's body.

- He mentions in relation to the work, that he had not read a page of it, as he was apprehensive from what he had learned of it by report, that he could not be satisfied with its contents; while at the same time he wished to avoid all occasion for coming out with a public declaration against one, whom he respected as an old friend. (*Letzte Bedenken. theol.* Band iii. s. 582 f.)
- See his judgment in Arnold's Church Hist. B. iii. Abth. 2. S. 6, where he says, among other things: "I hold this work of Mr. Arnold's to be the best, after the sacred scriptures, that is to be had in this line of writing, and hesitate not hereby to recommend it in the strongest terms to all my hearers, if they should have to stint themselves or beg money even to procure it."
  Those who wish to know more of this man, who in spite of all his defects forms one of the most interesting and instructive characters in the history of theology, are referred to the spirited sketch of Tholuck in the 2d Part of his Vermischte Schriften, P. 39 ff.
  Th. I. S. 248.
- Th. I. S. 40.

The man however who first turned the principle of Arnold to full account, and who is to be considered the founder of the proper rationalistic view of history, was the celebrated *Semler*. His early life was passed in pietistic connexions; where however a sickly methodistical style of religion was cultivated. He retained also all his days a sort of loose connexion with Pietism, in the way of what he called "private piety," as something wholly independent of all theological theories. This shows itself in various passages of his auto-biography, as, for example, in his account of the death of his daughter. Hence it was that he was led earnestly to oppose the appointment of the infamous *Bahrdt* to a professorship in Halle, and to write against the Wolfenbuttel Fragments. To *Lessing,* the publisher of them, who assured him that the work was given to the world only to promote inquiry, he replied forcibly: That is to set a town on fire in order to make trial of the engines. Still, however, his scientific tendency, and particularly his investigations in the form of historical criticism, ran, unconsciously to himself, directly into Rationalism.

With *Arnold* he had in common a strong prejudice against the ruling church, and in favour of all uncatholic dissenters. In his fruitful abstract of church history,* he utters his regret, that "of the so called heretical writings of the first centuries, almost nothing remains;" and adds the remark "that from such fragments as have been saved, one may easily see that they would be probably more worthy of being read than the wretched treatises of the catholics." For men like Tertullian, Bernard of Clairvaux, and Thomas Aquinas, he had no taste whatever. Augustine's doctrine of sin and grace he hated from the bottom of his heart; while upon his dear, liberal-minded Pelagius he lost no opportunity of bestowing the warmest praise, and published his Epistola ad Demetriadem with full backing and defiance in the way of notes.

To this was joined now, however, another most important element, which had no place with Arnold whatever; namely, the comprehension of the material of ecclesiastical history, and indeed of orthodoxy also itself, under the view of mobility, or strictly speaking, endless mutability; which we must take care not to confound with the conception of organic development. From his extensive historical studies he had received the indelible impression, that doctrines were always in a course of change, and that the church system as it stood in his own time was something which had existed constantly, under the same form, from the first. The whole history of doctrine, appeared to him as a confused chaos of opinions, changing with every period, and hence of no account properly in a theoretic respect at all, but only so far as they might have a good effect morally for the time. His own restless spirit was reflected in this theory. Of an entirely sanguine nature, as he informs us himself,* he had a perfect literary voracity, and save in the field of polite learning for which his immeasurably prosaic spirit had no taste, wandered in his one hundred and seventy-one different writings, through all possible spheres of

- In his Account of his Life, Th. T. S. 70.

knowledge;* every where making new discoveries, and illuminating the darkest corners with the lightning flashes of his penetrating genius; but never finding rest or satisfaction, and never rising to a general view or true idea. He saw indeed in the whole history of the Church motion and flow, but no unity in this change, no helmsman on the storm-tost sea. He rose not to the conception of an organic process, a development including the regularity of law, that unfolds always new treasures. History was for him a vast tumultuating waste, without guiding principle or certain aim; yea, in the case of the Church, a continually advancing disfiguration only of what might be regarded as the original biblical form of Christianity.

This view of Semler, according to which the church system itself was something that had grown up in the course of time, and this partly, at least, during the period which had been regarded previously as embracing the rise of popish corruption, served lo inflict on the old orthodoxy and its theory of history a second stroke, that proved indeed to be deadly. For this whole school based itself on the assumption, that whatever might have arisen in time could not be properly of divine or eternal right.

The tone which was thus struck by Semler found the most lively response, in a period, which through the influx of English deism and French materialism, and the prevalence of the philosophy of Wolff, leaned already with growing inclination to a shallow rationalistic *aufklärung* in the sphere of religion. His followers soon cast off the last remains of his affectionate respect for Pietism. Now it first became an earnest matter, with Arnold's principle of partiality for dissent. Arius in opposition to Athanasius, Pelagius against Augustine, the Socinians against the Reformers, were made to have full right even doctrinally on their side. Their only fault was that they had not carried their opposition sufficiently far; and hence the eighteenth century could find no more important work, than to complete the business of destruction upon the Church and her history. The vast labour of centuries was looked upon as labour spent in vain; Rationalism would have history every where to be different from what it was in fact; and so, not being able to change it, must needs come into a standing controversy with its contents, undertaking presumptuously to correct it after its own miserable subjective conceptions, and turning its greatest facts into insignificance. The acute dogmatical distinctions of the oecumenical councils, were thrust aside as sophistical subtleties. The symbolical books of the Protestant Church were condemned as dishonourable shackles for the mind; the deep speculations of the most spiritual thinkers derided as empty dreams; the interior exercises of tender devotional souls, pitied as enthusiastic fancies; the vigorous manifestations of faith in opposition to unbelief, cried down as wild zealotism and intolerance;

- He even wrote a book on the Habits of Snails in Winter, and showed a lively interest in the subject of making gold; in which however, as Tholuck supposes, not merely his scientific curiosity, but his devotion to the god Pluto also, may have been concerned.

the greatest enterprises of the Church in other times or among other people, branded as the product of dark religious fanaticism. All in one word that rose above the level of every day life, was forced to become common.*

To give some account at the same time of all this past activity of the world, the pragmatic fashion was now carried to its perfection; represented under its most learned, skilful, and respectable character by Münscher and Planck. Mosheim, following French examples, had already indeed laid down the rule that Church History must be pragmatic; that is, must not simply relate events, but as he expresses it, "unfold also, under the guidance of psychology, the causes to which they are to be referred in the passions, tricks, and windings of the human heart." This pragmatism was not so dangerous with Mosheim and his school; since through the connexion in which they still stood with the church orthodoxy, they had some regard to the authority of the scriptures and to Christian experience, as well as to psychology, and acknowledged, in conjunction with the subjective factors of history, the presence of objective forces also, by which the course of events was held to be ruled always in the last instance. But now, in the hands of religious indifferentism and rationalism, a purely subjective play of human passions. The most important doctrines and events, all tried by the standard of the most miserable private judgment were deduced from idle speculation or the lowest motives of a selfish heart; the divinity of Christ, for instance, from the rhetorical fancy of Athanasius; the doctrine of free grace and original sin, from Augustine's stiff humour and fondness for writing; the papacy of the Middle Ages, from the imposition of the false Isidorian decretals and the ambition of "the rascal" Hildebrand; the Reformation from the pecuniary embarrassment of Leo X.; the Lutheran dogma of the Lord's Supper from the obstinacy and contentious spirit of Luther himself.*

- How shamefully Rationalism, which has been indeed scientifically conquered, but still retains its adherents among the half-learned, and appears lately resuscitated again among the so called *Friends of Light* in Germany; can allow itself to deal with the most venerable names in Church History, may be seen, for instance, in the judgment of the general superintendent *Röhr* on *Augustine;* whom he styles, on account of his doctrine of sin and grace, "a profaner of the gospel and a rake turned pious." (Prediger-Bibliothek, Heft. 1. s. 13.) On the other hand the laïs Pelagius as "the venerable champion of reason against unreason, who even in his own time had the satisfaction of seeing the wisest and best men take their stand on his side," (s. 15.)
- In the case of this last point, the American divine *Joseph F. Berg* goes still further, and refers Luther's doctrine of consubstantiation at once to the *devil.* See his Lectures on Romanism, published 1840, p. 233; where he says—"On the whole, however, I am not disposed altogether to deny that the devil may have had some hand in originating Luther's notion of consubstantiation: it savours so much of transubstantiation, the chef d'œuvre of the evil one, that it would be hard to disprove the devil's agency in its invention." And yet we have been told by the same theological authority, in the *Protestant Banner,* deceased, that the eucharistic doctrine of Calvin and the Heidelberg Catechism is still more absurd than that of Luther; because forsooth the soul cannot literally *eat flesh,* as this doctrine is gravely charged with teaching! It must follow of course that the Reformed theory of the Lord's Supper, as it stood originally, is still *more* devilish even than the Lutheran.

Thus was God excluded from history altogether; which was at the same time, to thrust out its eyes and tear the living heart from its bosom. The lifecourse of the Redeemer's bride, was caricatured into a "history of human folly." The theatre of the kingdom of God in the world, was degraded into a wild arena of base, unholy passions. We might wonder, how with such a view, it was still possible to take any interest in the study of church history at all, were the maxim, *Similis simili gaudet,* not at hand to explain the seeming contradiction. The least that a still somewhat noble nature could do, in these circumstances, was to fall upon this fool-interlude, in the drama of human life indignantly, with the scourge of sharp satire. This was done by *Henke,* in his work, first published 1789, and in different editions since. He wrote the History of the Church throughout, to adopt the mild judgment of *Hase* in the case, as "a representation of errors, in religion and judicial process against spiritual despotism in every shape."

It was in this period of cheerless destruction, that Hamann, the Northern magus, in deep sorrow, uttered his complaint: "What a negative age we live in! What hosts of negative men! All plunder and rob, no one is willing to give. All are bent on destroying, nobody thinks to build. No earnestness, all frivolity; no dignity, all buffoonery; no object, all side references only!" His friend and kinsman in spirit, *Herder,* longed also for deliverance from the self-styled philosophical century, that hated mortally, to use his own language, all that was either miraculous or mysterious; and from the depth of his warm heart, that burned with zeal for the beautiful and the noble, was heard, passionately to exclaim, "Would that I had been born in the Middle Ages!"

This wish found a lively echo in many young hearts, whose time of appearing on the theatre of public life had not yet come. *Herder* himself, also contributed some material at least towards the erection of the new dome, that was to rise in the midst of these dreary ruins, by his philosophical and historical writings; which belong already, in their stand-point, to another time and tendency.

When necessity is greatest, help shows itself to be most near. Rationalism, with its full denial of the divinity of Christ, and its deistic degradation of God himself to the character of a private indifferent spectator merely of human events, from beyond the clouds, lost every deeper conception of man also, at the same time. For that which makes man to be man, and gives him his true worth, is the presence of God in him, in which he lives, moves, and has his being. It was quite in order therefore, that this spiritually bankrupt age, should be led first back again to the consciousness of the original, ideal dignity of the human nature itself, so as to see in this mirror with shame its own wretched visage, and thus come to repentance and a sound conversion.

This took place chiefly by means of *Herder;* who without question is to be ranked among the richest, noblest, and most life-pregnant spirits, in the history of Literature. His nature was compounded of theological, philosophical, and poetical material, endowed with the most open sense for the beautiful and the grand in the most diversified forms, and adorned with the

most comprehensive cultivation in a general way. He was the inspired and inspiring prophet of humanity, in its purest sense. He came forward in the year 1774, with his small work (the sign of a new epoch,) entitled, "A Philosophy of History for the culture of Humanity;" which he extended ten years after, into his celebrated "Ideas for the History of Humanity," so highly commended by the accomplished *John von Müller.*

The first point in which Herder rose above the rationalistic historiography, and prepared the way for the modern, was in his apprehension of it as living spirit, a process of *organic development.* In this development, he saw a constant *progress towards the better.* This was a most fruitful thought, that served to bring light and order into the chaotic confusion of the rationalistic history. It came to a reconciliation again between the subject and the objective constraint of the world. "Humanity," he tells us, "always remains humanity; and still a plan of progress is visible—my great theme!" (S. 76.) He appeals, in favour of the theory of development, to the analogy of the single human life and of nature, where we meet it on all sides, and goes on to say: "Clearly so also in human history! The Egyptian could not be without the Oriental; the Greek rested on him again as his basis; the Roman lifted himself into view on the back of the whole world. Actual *advance* and *constant development,* even though no individual gain should appear! All on a wide scale; the theatre of a ruling plan upon the earth, although the last purpose may be hidden from our sight; the theatre of divinity, though it should be only amid the ruins of life in its particular forms." Hence he exhibits, for example, the old Oriental history as the childhood, the Grecian as the youth, and the Roman as the manhood of humanity. (S. 53, ff.)

Closely connected with this is the second point in which *Herder* exerted a salutary influence. He created, namely, a *love* for history in all its stages; since no part can be torn from an organic whole, without destroying its beauty. In the face of the ridiculous self-complacency of the eighteenth century, which claimed all illumination and wisdom to itself alone, he had the courage to show, that every people and every period, not excepting even the so much decried Middle Ages, had possessed its peculiar glory and worth, and that his contemporaries, in their contempt for the past, only revealed their own poverty and disgrace. He will have nothing to do with that egotistical narrowness of mind, that affects to bring every thing to the measure of its own subjectivity. No single people, no single age, in his view, can represent the full ideal of humanity; it is distributed accordingly into a thousand forms, and wanders a perfect Proteus through all climes and centuries."* With untiring affection, this gifted cosmopolite gathered there, in his numerous works, the flowers of humanity of all zones, nations and times, and wove them into a wreath, whose fresh fragrance served wonderfully to quicken the genius, especially of the rising generation.

- In the first of the works just named. See J. C. Herder's Sämmtliche Werke. zur Phil. and Gesch. Th 3. S. 74.
- S. 76.

Many of his words were like the morning breath that foretells a beautiful day. On all sides was awakened once more sympathy with humanity, and along with this a new enthusiasm in the study of its history. Still *Herder* himself never came to a full, comprehending, general view of his subject. His reverence for humanity was of a somewhat unmeasured and indefinite character. *Jean Paul* says of him very aptly, in a letter to Jacobi: "It requires broad wings, to swim over so many remote fields. Herder is made up of half a dozen geniuses at once, *wanting only the binding force of a properly independent personal reflection,* without which neither poetry nor philosophy has ever become complete."

A number of other men now soon arose, who contributed in various ways to promote respect and affection for the past. Here especially is to be noticed the *Romantic School,* of the two *Schlegels, Tieck* and *Novalis;* who chastised severely the shallow pretensions of the reigning unhistorical Rationalism, and drew forth the rich religious poetry of the Middle Ages from its dark retreat. *Von der Hagen,* the two *Grimms, Lachmann,* and others, brought into view particularly the glories of German antiquity. The great antiquarians *Wolf, Niebuhr, Creuzer,* produced a much more deep and living apprehension of Grecian and Roman history.

Of still more importance, however, was the turn which took place at this time in philosophy; as it served to bring to clear consciousness, and systematic order, the ideas irregularly thrown out by Herder and his spiritual allies. *Schelling* overcame the stand-point of critical reflection as established by Kant, and the subjective idealism of Fichte; planted himself on the ground of realism and the objective reason; and applied himself with fond partiality in his earlier years, to the speculative study of nature, under the view of a self-unfolding organic process. His disciple and successor, *Hegel,* carried the principle of a dialectic development, with the most amazing energy of metaphysical thought, into every sphere of the philosophy of spirit. We wish not to endorse Hegel's theology of development without qualification; but whatever may be thought of it, one thing is certain. It has left an impression on German science that can never be effaced; and has contributed more than any other influence, to diffuse a clear conception of the interior organism of history, as a richer evolution continually of the idea of humanity, as well as a proper respect for its universal and objective authority, in opposition to the self-sufficient and arrogant individualism of the rationalistic school. The Hegelian method requires, moreover, that the historian should resign himself without prejudice to his subject, and thus suffer it to come to a living reproduction according to the law of its own nature. Hence it stands in direct contradiction to that subjective show of reason, that is never satisfied with history as it stands, but must be always correcting it after the fashion of its own private fancies According to the whole stand-point of this philosophy, history is a self-evolution of the absolute spirit, and hence supremely rational throughout. Such is the sense of that celebrated, though often misunderstood, dictum of Hegel: All that is rational is real, and all that is real, (or absolutely existent, substantial,) is rational. Here, however, we come also on the fatal rock of this speculative method of history. While Rationalism had scarcely the most remote conception of a divine presence in history,

and resolved everything into free human activity, the philosophy before us falls over to the opposite extreme of pantheism and fatalism. The individual is regarded as the blind organ of the world-spirit; evil is held to be a necessary medium for reaching the good; and thus the idea of guilt and moral accountability is necessarily lost. We may say indeed that the Hegelian *Method* rests on the supposition of the necessity of evil as the negative condition of moral progress. For sin in the sphere of morality is made to correspond exactly with contradiction in the sphere of logic; and this last, according to Hegel's dialectics, forms the impulsive force in the moving process of all thought. It results, moreover, from the pantheistic tendency just mentioned, that no sufficient account is made of the personal and individual Such emphasis is laid upon the general, that life in the concrete dissolves into mere abstraction, the endlessly diversified fulness of history shrinks into a few logical forms, and living personalities are transformed into ideal shadows. All these defects are found united in the modern Tubingen school, with *Dr. Bauer** and *Dr. Strauss* at its head. These, preceded by *Schwegler* and *Zeller* have handled particularly the history of primitive Christianity in the way of pretended dialectic construction, with a spirit altogether pantheistic and ruinous.

The Hegelian Philosophy then is in itself no safe conductor, through the halls of Church History. Its logical forms of thinking, are capable of being applied in the most opposite ways. Whilst it has led the way for many to a historical and churchly spirit, and proved an admirable help towards the overthrow of the common Rationalism, and a thorough speculative understanding and defence of orthodoxy; it has served, on the other hand, when sundered from the real life revelation of Christianity, to produce itself a new form of Rationalism, very different from the first, more spiritual indeed, but for this reason also more dangerous, that from an opposite direction shows the most radical hostility to all concrete and individual historical life.

Of much more account than the philosophy of Schelling and Hegel, for the formation of the modern German theology, has been the influence of *Schleiermacher,* the greatest theological genius, we may say, since the Reformation. The most various forms of cultivation belonging to his time were brought together, under an exceedingly original scientific combination, in his person; and there is not to be found now a single theologian of importance, in whom the influence of his great mind is not more or less to be traced. History, to be sure, was not his sphere; and what has been published from him since his death, in this department, belongs to his weakest productions. Still, however, by his profound doctrinal and moral views, he has influenced *indirectly* the treatment of historical theology also, to a most important extent. The productive, strictly evangelical element, in his system, is found in this; that he placed the person of Christ as the Redeemer and the author of a new life, in the centre of theology; put emphasis on the idea of *communion* in religion;

- Not to be confounded with the notorious Brimo Baur.

and in this manner opened the way at least for a churchly tendency. He forms a supplementary counterpoise over against the Hegelian theory thus far, that he fastens his eye sharply in particular upon the original and specific in Christianity, and instead of starting from the idea, makes religious experience rather the fountain of dogmatic knowledge. On the whole, however, Schleiermacher's method is not so much historical as mathematical. The different constituents of an idea came into view with him, more as standing together in space than as growing forth one from another in time.

Out of his school has proceeded the most important church historian of our time *Augustus Neander;* who however is to be considered some steps in advance of his position. He attaches himself, namely, still more closely than Schleiermacher, to the real and positive element of religion, and allows far more weight to the idea of organic development. In this respect he appears in a certain affinity with the Hegelian philosophy, although known as one of its bitter opponents. The greatest charm of his historical writing results precisely from this, that he causes religious characters to rise gradually, in the way of living reproduction, before the eyes of his readers; and all with such amiable pious artlessness of manner, that the picture becomes irresistibly at the same time a source of practical edification. His work, which is now brought down in ten parts to the time of Bonifance VIII, deserves to be presented in full, under a worthy form, to the English and American public, and to take the place which has been heretofore allowed to Mosheim. Possibly a judicious compilation or epitome as a manual for students of theology, might be better than a literal translation, which at all events, by reason of the easy carelessness of Neander's style, would be no easy task. This distinguished monument of sanctified learning is, without question, the most important product of the modern German theology in the sphere of church history, and must long maintain a high authority. At the same time, it is not to be denied that, in point of *church* character, it is no longer fully equal to the demands of the time. Neander stands still on Schleiermacher's ground in this respect, that the church spirit appears with him under an indefinite form, and in the general character too much of a mere feeling of communion. Hence his aversion to a pointedly distinct orthodoxy, and his partiality towards free dissenting tendencies. Since the Jubilee of the Reformation, however, in 1817, the evangelical theology of Germany has taken a strong and constantly growing church direction; and this, beyond all doubt, will give character more and more to the future. To be complete now, a Church History should unite in proper harmony a thorough use of original sources, clear apprehension, organic development, lively and interesting delineation, strong but liberal and universal church feeling, and fruitfulness in the way of practical edification. It may be long, perhaps, before we possess a work that shall satisfy equally all these requirements. Still however the elements which it calls for, are all actually at hand in the different tendencies of the modern German theology. The material is prepared; the plan of the edifice too is ready in its main outline; only the master hand is waited for, that shall put the

work together and cause the parts to appear as a complete, magnificent and harmonious whole.

After this short review of the most conspicuous modern historical schools, let us endeavour now to bring into a single view the right conception of church history, as it may be gathered from all that has been said. The main point here is to set in proper light the idea of *organic development;* since this forms the key to the understanding of history, and the watchword of all the more important works, in this department, which we have already brought into view in the first part of this tract. True, this conception itself is differently held by different persons, and I also claim the right of deviating in several points from Hegel, Schleiermacher, Neander, &c., as has already been intimated, in what goes before. But still there runs a common thread through the whole latter view of church history, which it is above all important to discern and understand. Such as are acquainted with the subject in any measure by correct personal reflection, will judge indulgently of the following attempt; since a philosophy of church history, and a complete theory of historical development from the theological stand-point, is something which is wanting to us as yet altogether. Any deficiency that may take place in my particular exposition of the idea of development, it must be remembered, can in no way impair the truth and value of the idea itself.

The Modern Historiography, or the Standpoint of Organic Development.

The stand-point of the present historical theology of Germany is not something isolated, the sheer subjective product of some last theologians; but the necessary result of previous stand-points, resting itself in this way on the solid ground and bottom of history. The orthodox treatment of history, as well as the rationalistic, came to a dissolution by the irresistible process of their own development, under the one-sided tendency which belonged to each. But this dissolution was only the necessary transition to a new life. Out of their ruins the elements of truth on both sides, divested of their perishable hull, rose and became united in a higher third, in which they now came to their true force. We allow both the former methods then up to a certain point, and incorporate them so far into our own view.

The *orthodox* theory of history we hold to be right, in two essential points. First, in insisting upon something unchangeable and everlasting in history. But while the theory identifies this, at once with the *church* doctrine, and affirms that *this* has been at all times the same, and has undergone neither decrease nor increase, but perversions only and obscurations; we, on the other hand, distinguish between truth as objectively present in Christ and in the scriptures, and truth as subjectively present in the consciousness of the church, and say: Christianity in itself and objectively considered is complete in Christ, in whom dwells the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and who is the same yesterday, to-day, and

for ever; as also in his word, which is exhibited by the holy scriptures of the New Testament, in a pure, original, perfect and absolutely normative form, for all times. Subjective Christianity, on the contrary, or the life of the God-man in his Church, is a process, a development, which begins small, and grows always larger, till it comes at last to full manhood in Christ; so that it is the believing human world may have appropriated to itself, both outwardly and inwardly, the entire fulness of objective Christianity, or the life of Christ. In this view the word of God also was not at once understood by the church from the beginning, in all its depth and comprehension, but gradually always more and more with the advancing age of the church. We must say, accordingly, that the reformers, for instance, understood the word of God better than the church fathers and the schoolmen.—Then we agree with the orthodox stand-point, in the second place, believing the *church* to be the bearer of God's truth, and Christian life, the lawful and proper heir of all the promises of the gospel. But we do not, for this reason, agree with it in denying the sects all right to exist, and excluding them from all participation in the truth. On the contrary, we suppose them to play an indispensable part, in modifying and determining the development of the orthodox church itself.

Thus do we exhibit our position, also, with regard to the rationalistic theory of history. We consider it right in this respect generally, in the first place, that it apprehends the life and doctrine of the church as something moveable and flowing. But in determining more particularly the nature and character of this movement, we differ from it essentially. The rationalist sees in the movement only the lawless play of caprice, without any unity at the ground of the manifold, without any fixed and definite end, resolving all mainly into the course of mere human affections and passions. History is for him a continual ebb and flow, that still comes in the end always to the old thing; or, if he allows a progress, it is made to consist in a process of rarefaction, in the dissolution of previous church views, with nothing left at last but the miserable conception of an abstract religion of mere reason and nature. But we conceive of historical movement as an ever-increasing stream, whose course has been already prescribed in the plan of everlasting wisdom before the formation of the world, and that now rolls itself forward according to divine laws, to empty itself finally in the ocean of eternity. We maintain, consequently, that the Spirit of Christ himself, uninterruptedly present in the church, is the chief factor in history, to whose power all human factors, which are also to be acknowledged in their place, must be regarded as subordinate; and that nothing which has once come to be of true historical weight can be absolutely negated or made to become null, but must ever incorporate itself as an abiding element into the subsequent parts of the process. Those who have lived and died in the Lord, are followed by their works into the quiet abodes of everlasting blessedness, (comp. Rev. xiv. 13.) As it regards the relation, in which Rationalism places dissent to orthodoxy, the sects to the church, we agree with it thus far, that the sects are not to be counted as pure error; whilst we maintain, in direct opposition to it, that they are justifiable over against the church only so far as they may have come to

labour under disease, and that after the restoration of the general body, *which always follows sooner or later,* they must be overwhelmed by the judgment of history. It is only the *church* which has the promise that the gates of hell shall not prevail against her.

We may characterize our stand-point, then, in few words, with regard to the first point here noticed, as that of *regular or organic development,* and with regard to the view taken of orthodoxy and dissent, as that of free, or *protestant, evangelically catholic, ecclesiasticism.*

It remains now to explain somewhat more particularly these terms of distinction, and to show their force. What then, in the first place, are we to understand by organic or *regular development,* in itself considered? And how, in the second place, is the general idea to be applied to the history of the Church?

Only that which is dead has the privilege of being *done.* All, on the other hand, that can lay claim to life, is in its inmost nature a genesis, a movement, process, development. So we find it even in nature, which is the pre-supposition, and, at the same time, the mirror, of spirit. The lowest kind of processes, which indeed can be only improperly so termed, is the mechanical motion of the heavenly bodies, which revolve around their sun, obeying unconsciously the immanent law of their own constitution. This motion, however, always returning into itself, is not yet life, but at best an analogy only of life. The proper genesis first appears in the sphere of organic nature, in the life of the plant. The plant is possessed of a real life, and is the subject thus of a development that begins with the seed, forms itself from this into root, stem, branch, leaf, and blossom, and becomes complete in its fruit. Here we have progress constantly from the lower to the higher; but still nothing is revealed, that was not contained potentially at first in the germ. The last result accordingly of the vegetable development, the fruit, comprises in itself again new seeds; so that the end returns always with new wealth to the beginning.

A still higher form of life is the animal; at the head of which, though of a specifically different order of existence, stands, so far as his earthly nature is concerned. Man, to come to him at once, exists first as an embryo, still interwoven with the life of the mother, and as such is said to pass as it were cursorily, in his conformation, through all the lower stages of the animal life. After his birth, he makes the course of childhood, boyhood, youth, manhood, and old age. In all these stages he is man, and preserves thus in his development the unity of his nature; but in all, at the same time he is again different, inasmuch as his general nature takes on continually a more definite form, and reveals itself in a higher and more perfect way. Still even the highest stage, the life of the old man, is but the full evolution of the life that was originally present in the child. This development we denominate regular and organic; since it follows with necessity an inward life force, proceeds with equal, steady, order, and continues always true to the original nature of the man, till in the end it has brought the whole fulness of it into view. The German language, which is uncommonly rich and philosophical, has an admirable word, that expresses all that is comprised in this idea of organic development. It is the word *aufheben,* which is so much used, and we may say so much abused also, in the

Hegelian philosophy. It includes three meanings, namely, to *abolish* (tollere), to *preserve* (conservare), and to *raise* to a higher state (elevare). All these senses are wonderfully combined, in the idea with which we are now concerned. We may say with the fullest truth, that in every higher stage of his existence, his previous life is in this threefold view *aufgehoben.* The child is abolished as a child in the young man, and yet is preserved at the same time, and raised unto a higher stage of life. The temporary outward form is abolished; the substance, the idea is preserved; not however by continuing to be what it was before, but by mounting upwards to a more exalted mode of outward existence.

Parallel precisely with the bodily life of man in this view, is the life also of his spirit. For soul and body are by divine constitution most intimately bound together, and what God has thus joined, man has no right to put asunder. Both parts of his being develop themselves, hand in hand together. Man comes not into the world a scholar, an artist, or the possessor of a moral and religious character. He carries within his mind the capacity for life in such form; but this only in the way of germ, that must yet be developed, by impulse from within and the influence of proper conditions without, as the plant grows through the action of air, sunshine and rain. Here, also, we have in full again, what we have just noticed in the case of his animal life. Spiritual growth or development is likewise a process of annihilation, preservation, and exaltation; in which it comes in the end to a complete explication only, of what was present by implication at the start. This must be affirmed even of the development of the life of religion itself. Its commencement is the new birth; its end, the resurrection of the body. This last is only the full consummation of the first, its proper ultimate consequence, by which the new spirit has added to it the new body also, as its needed organ and blessed habitation.

All this is so clear and so fully established by common experience, that it is not likely to be called in question by any reflecting man. It is not marvellous then, that the same simple, familiar truth, as soon as it comes to be applied to the history of the human race, should be so stoutly and stiffly denied, as we find it to be in fact by many? What holds of the individual must hold also of humanity as a whole, since this is simply the organic totality of all single men. So precisely as the single Christian does not become complete at a stroke, but only by degrees, the Church, as the complex of all Christians, must admit and require too a gradual development. Christ himself, the head of the Church, submitted to the law of a genesis in time, and grew from infancy up to manhood. This genesis was no apparition merely, no δοκεῖν, as many of the Gnostics supposed; but truth and reality. “Jesus increased,” it is written, “in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man,” (Luke 2:52.) “Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience, by the things which he suffered,” (Hebrews 5:8.) How then shall the Church, which repeats and continues the earthly human life of Christ, form an exception to this law of development. The Lord himself teaches the contrary, in the parables he employs to represent the nature of the kingdom of God; comparing it with the small mustard seed that gradually becomes a great tree (Matthew

13:31-32); and with leaven, that works and spreads till the whole lump is leavened (v. 33.) Paul is full of the idea of a constantly advancing development on the part of the Church. He speaks of the whole building of the saints, as growing to a holy temple in the Lord (*ἐν ᾧ πᾶσα ἡ οἰκοδομὴ συναρμολογούμενη αὔξει εἰς ναὸν ἅγιον,* Compare Ephesians 2:21, 1st Peter 2:5.) He dwells on the edifying of the body of Christ, (*εἰς οἰκοδομὴν τοῦ σώματος χριστου,*) until we all come, in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, (Compare Ephesians 4:12-13, 4:16, 3:18-19 and Colossians 2:19.)

We present now the particular characteristics of this development of the kingdom of God, as they disclose themselves in a thorough study of history.

1. The development of the church is partly external and partly internal. The first consists in the progressive diffusion of the gospel among those who are not Christians, by the activity of missions. This must go forward, as long as there may be a soul that has not yet heard of Christ crucified. It is not at all times equally active. It showed itself with the greatest power in the apostolic age, among the Jews, Greeks, and Romans; then on the threshold of the middle ages, when the Church received the Germanic nations as a new material into her bosom; and appears now again in the spirit of modern missions, which is turned with increasing earnestness towards Asia,

- Dr. *Cheever,* the editor of the *New York Evangelist,* in his review of my work, the Principle of Protestantism, roughly rejects the idea of a steadily advancing development of the Church, and affirms in opposition to it that Christendom moves always at like distance around the same centre, the Bible; so that the 19th century is just as near to this centre as the first! A fine compliment to humanity truly, on the part of this learned divine; by which it is thus sunk to such form of existence as belongs to a soulless and lifeless planet, that likewise revolves, always at the same distance around its centre, the sun. As Dr. Cheever is no friend of German Theology, I will refer him to an English authority of some reputation, Bishop Butler, who in his *Analogy,* Part II. Chap. iv., towards the close, plainly sanctions the idea of a progressive development on the part of the human world, in the following words: "However, thus much is manifest, that the whole natural world and government of it, is a scheme or system; not a fixed, but a progressive one: a scheme, in which the operation of various means takes up a great length of time, before the ends they tend to can be attained. The change of seasons, the ripening of the fruits of the earth, the very history of a flower, is an instance of this. And so is human life. Thus vegetable bodies, and those of animals, though possibly formed at once, yet grow up by degrees to a mature state. And thus rational agents, who animate these latter bodies, are naturally directed to form each his own manners and character, by the gradual gaining of knowledge and experience, and by a long course of action. Our existence is not only successive, as it must be of necessity; but one state of our life and being is appointed by God, to be a preparation for another; and that to be the means of attaining to another succeeding one, infancy to childhood, childhood to youth, youth to mature age. . . . Thus, in the daily course of natural providence, God operates in the very same manner, as in the dispensation of Christianity, making one thing subservient to another, this somewhat farther; and so on, through a progressive series of means, which extend, both backward and forward, beyond our utmost view."

Africa and Australia. In many periods, the Church has been so fully taken up with her internal concerns, in the way of establishing a principle or combating error, as to have no time left for missions. So in the heart of the middle ages, and in the period of the reformation. Still action in this form can never fail wholly; since it belongs inseparably to the vocation of the militant church.

But the missionary work alone is by no means all that this vocation includes. As soon as Christianity has gained footing among a people, a more difficult interior mission begins; having for its object the transfusion of the manners and institutions of such a people with the Christian principle. This forms that inward development, which we have here chiefly in view. It spreads itself over all portions of the natural life, as the outward missionary work does over all lands and people, agreeably to the claims of Christianity as the absolute world religion. Like leaven, the gospel must work itself into the universal mass of life, under all its established forms.

The Church finds at the start an existing State, in a certain stage of development; with which, as ruled by the principle of heathenism, it comes into violent collision, the source of bloody persecutions. Out of all these however she rises victorious, in the time of Constantine. Then, during the Middle Ages, she brings the state more and more into subjection, and occupies it with Christian laws and institutions. Under this discipline, the state gradually comes of age, and since the Reformation takes a more free posture towards the Church; either in the way of more or less direct control, as in Lutheran lands and in the English establishment; or in the way of peaceful indifference, as here in America. Since however the Church is itself social in its very nature, she must include a regimen also of some sort, a system of order and discipline, in her own organization. This constitution at first, while the nations still need education, appears under the episcopal or hierarchic form; but with the Reformation, this has been changed, to a large extent at least, for the presbyterial, in which the people are brought to take part in the government.

Again, the Church meets, among cultivated nations at least, the Fine Arts. With these she has nothing to do, so far as they stand in the service of sin. But their proper human value she appropriates in the end to herself, and employs it, transfused with the religious principle, for the purposes of worship; in which way, architecture, sculpture, painting, music, and poetry, find their proper place and lay their richest products on the altar of the Lord.

The Church, requires, in the third place, a Science, in which she may come to clear self-consciousness, and have a full view of her relation to God, her peculiar life, her duties and privileges. This is *Theology;* that is, the scientific apprehension of religion. This again has its own development, of which no farther notice can be taken here. As science, she comes of course into contact with the secular or profane sciences, which serve her as a natural basis; as exegesis, for instance, with classic and oriental philology; as church history, with the history of the world; as apologetic, polemic, dogmatic and ethics, with philosophy; as homiletics, with rhetoric; &c. This relation too, like that to art, is partly hostile and in part

friendly. Thus, for example, the Church in her theology, separates what is heathenish from the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle; but appropriates their results in the way of pure thought, as well as their bold inquiring spirit and dialectic method. Plato, in the patristic age, and Aristotle, in the scholastic, have exerted an immense influence on the construction of theology; and so more recently, in England, Locke, and in Germany, the systems of Kant, Fichte, Schelling and Hegel, in their necessary succession. The same thing might be shown also of other branches of secular science; but this would carry us here quite too far.

Finally, the Church transforms the *natural social life* of the nations; and causes her faith to show itself in a system of virtues and good works, which as Christian all rest on the principle of love to God. Hence we have a history of *Christian life,* understanding by this the manifestation of faith, or the morality of religion. This life is different, according to the faith and doctrinal system lying at its ground. Thus the practical piety and morality of Roman Catholicism is characteristically legal, punctilious, unfree and anxious; but distinguished also for great sacrifices, the virtue of obedience, and full consecration to the Church. That of Protestantism is evangelically free, cheerful and joyous in the possession of justification by grace, and rests in the deep inward sense of union with God through Jesus Christ.

2. The development of the Church is *organic.* It is no mechanical accumulation of events, and no result simply of foreign influences. Certain outward conditions are indeed required for it, as the plant needs air, moisture, and light, in order to grow. But still the impelling power of the process, is the inmost life of the church herself. Christianity is a new creation, that unfolds itself continually more and more from within, and extends itself by the necessity of its own nature. It takes up, it is true, foreign material also, in the process; but changes it at once into its own spirit, and assimilates it to its own nature, as the body converts the food, required for its growth, into flesh and blood, marrow and bone. The church accordingly, in this development, remains true always to her own nature, and reveals only what it contained in embryo, from the start. Through all changes—first Greek, then Roman Catholic, then German evangelical—she never ceases still to be the church. So the oak also changes, but never becomes an apple tree. The expression organic implies farther, that the stages of development, like the links of a chain, or better, like the members of a living body, are indissolubly bound together. Just because the church does unfold itself from within, as no new element, obeying its own life-law throughout, the process itself must form a whole, in which the several parts mutually complete each other. It is only the entire history of the church, from her commencement in the congregation at Jerusalem to her consummation in the general judgment, which can fully represent her conception. Here, however, will be found no trait superfluous, no trait wanting, and every part in its proper place, as is required by the nature of a beautiful and complete organism.

3. The development in question includes the threefold form of action, which has been already described as expressed by the German word *aufheben.* Each new stage negates the preceding one, by raising its inmost being to a more adequate form of existence. Annihilation

is thus required. The seed must die, to make way for the plant. The bud is burst by the flower. The child must put off childhood, in becoming a youth. But it is only the outward, the transient, that is thus annihilated. The substance abides. So Judaism is taken up (*aufgehoben*) by Christianity; that is, it exists no longer as the legal and particularistic institute it was before; but all the truths of the Old Testament, at the same time, are preserved in the gospel, by being fulfilled. The Grecian and Roman nationalities came to an end, in their pagan form, as soon as they became Christian; but under a higher character they still continue to exist, and have done specific service for the church. The Greek Church, by means of Grecian culture, was the organ for producing speculative doctrine and forms of worship. The Roman Church, true to the spirit of ancient Rome under Christian form, brought forward ecclesiastical government and law, and the idea of a catholicity that should embrace and pervade all lands and nations, as well as all departments of life. She has not forgotten, of a truth, the line of Virgil: "Tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento!" The Middle Ages have been taken up by Protestantism; that is, the period exists here no longer as that theocratic universal monarchy, which had its centre in Rome and the pope for its head; but its deepest meaning has been fulfilled in the reformation, and its intellectual and spiritual acquirements have descended to the evangelical church, as its heir, to be improved still farther under a new character. Rationalism, as a system of unbelief, is scientifically and morally annihilated by the reviving evangelical theology of Germany; but its grammatico-historical interpretation of the scriptures and its whole effort to reach a critical scientific apprehension of Christianity and the church on their natural, human side, have been preserved, by being raised into higher connexions and brought under the power of a living faith. Only in this form, indeed, could the previous effort at all reach its own proper end. How the orthodox and rationalistic methods of history, have been made to pass away in the modern, we have shown already at some length.

4. The development of the Church is carried forward, by means of *dialectic opposites* and *extremes*. This is a very weighty point, which is indispensable to a right understanding of Church History. Here the history of mankind shows itself different from the history of the divine Redeemer. His life unfolded itself quietly, like a clear stream flowing with smooth regularity in a straight course. It was a line that led, without the least deviation, to God. He suffered indeed and died; but this came not properly from the constitution of his own nature morally considered; it grew out of his voluntary assumption of the place of men, in order to redeem them from the power of sin. His own life, as such, remained always calm and serenely clear, in uninterrupted communion with his heavenly Father. This was because he knew no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth. If Adam had not fallen, his life would have unfolded itself in his posterity, in the same way, without being required either to pass through death, that sharpest and hardest of all contradictions. He fell, however, and the human nature along with him, including of course the whole race; as partaking of the same life. Hence, in history, all errors, contradictions, conflicts and sufferings, with death at their

head. Christ has appeared indeed as the second Adam, and introduced into humanity a new principle of life, that must in the end triumph over all contradiction, all sin and all evil. But this principle can realize itself only in a gradual way. The Church on earth consists not of perfect saints, but of dying sinners, comprehended in a process of sanctification, which will end only with the outward resurrection. Freedom from sin and error may be predicated of Christ and the Church triumphant, but not of the Church militant. So long accordingly as the elements of a still unrenewed life continue to work in her constitution, her development must necessarily involve hard struggles and conflicts. The stream of church history flows with abrupt turns, in a zigzag course. At one time, it winds, soft and clear, through flowery meadows and smiling fields; but again it rushes headlong, wild, foaming, over towering precipices, bearing giant oaks and huge rocks irresistibly in its way, and forming the while also cataracts to be gazed upon with admiration and terror. Here, it meets no resistance; but now, a mountain comes in its way, which it must go around or break through. Such is the complex variety, the terrific, though deeply interesting romance, the tragic scenery, which sin has introduced into the drama of the world's history.

This view may be established first in a general way, by referring to the most comprehensive leading periods of history. With the reformation of the 16th century, the main stream of the Church took a direction wholly opposite to that which it had before. Thus far, the history of Christianity had been a development of the principle of objectivity, authority, obedience, Jewish Christian legalism. This was carried so far, that the power of the church became at last an insupportable bondage. Then the spirit of personal freedom, trained by such discipline to ripe self-possession, rose in revolt, and struck into quite another way. With this begins the evolution of the principle of subjectivity, the Gentile Christian element, evangelical liberty and independence. At the first, this movement carries along with it still the force of the old church life, as derived from the Middle Ages; but in proportion as it recedes from where it started, it is found to lose more and more its objective church character. Evangelical freedom has degenerated into fleshly self-will and licentiousness. The original common life of Protestantism has run out into a multitude of separate interests. The authority of God's word and of history is made to bend to private will and private judgment; which of course are different in different cases, and only affect subordination to the Bible, while in fact by their contempt for history they set themselves above it. Thus, for the papacy of the one bishop of Rome, is substituted the papacy of endless sect systems and sect heads. No wonder, then, that the historical stream should even now be turning from this pseudo-protestant extreme, towards a higher form of true church life in the opposite direction.

Not only on this large scale however is the law in question illustrated; it repeats itself also, in each single period, within more narrow compass. Every where one extreme calls forth another. Take, for instance, the image controversy in the Greek Church. The superstitious veneration for images, which had there become prevalent excited the emperor, *Leo III*. to put them away altogether, and the council of Constantinople, in the year 754, confirmed his

judgment. This ultra-spiritualism, however, again produced a reaction the other way; which found a powerful patron in the empress *Irene,* and was ecclesiastically sanctioned also, at least in part, by the second council of Nice, A. D. 787. So we see the scholastic and mystic systems of the 12th century again in the persons of *Abelard* and *Bernard of Clairvaux,* violently opposing each other; although they could as little bear to be divorced as light and heat, or head and heart. The formality of the English Episcopal Church causes Puritanism to appear; and when this swings over to the opposite extreme, a reaction follows in the restoration of the Stuarts. The orthodoxy of the school Lutheranism, which exalted knowledge at the expense of action, gives rise to *Pietism;* which now undervalues orthodoxy again in favour of practical religion. To refer finally to a quite recent case, Puseyism owes its rise mainly to its arch-enemy, the ultra-protestantism of the day.

We might illustrate the same truth also, from the lives of single Christians; in the case of whom, the strongest characters precisely, and those which have exerted the widest influence, are found to have been formed through a process of sharp extremes, while the essential identity of their nature has still been preserved in the midst of all. We will simply refer, in the way of example, to Paul, Augustine, and Luther.

5. The truth, in this whole case, lies not in the extremes, but in the *middle,* or the *deep* rather, in which they may be said to meet! The very nature of an extreme is, that it pushes one side of a truth into prominence at the cost of another; wronging thus the interest itself which it seeks to uphold, since the organic nature of truth makes it impossible for any part of it to be fairly represented, without due regard at the same time to other parts. Let this be illustrated again, by actual historical examples. The orthodox christology holds in the midst, between the one-sided theories of Nestorianism and Eutychianism. The first has right, so far as it insists upon the distinction of the divine and human natures in Christ, and opposes all pantheistic confusion of the one with the other. But with this, it overlooks the personal unity that binds them together; and hence its distinction of the divine and human, becomes abstract and only half true. Eutychianism presses the unity of both at the expense of their difference, and runs out accordingly into a monophysitic mingling of the two into a single nature. The church christology, as it was established by the councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon, unites the truth of both sides, in each case sundered from its accompanying error, into a complete general view, in which the unity as well as the distinction of the divine and human, in the Redeemer's person, are allowed to come to their right, — In the image controversy already mentioned, the extremes of iconoclasm and iconolatry are alike one-sided and half-true. The right stand-point, that for instance maintained by Gregory I. and by the French Church of the Carlovingian period in the so called *libris Carolinis,* distinguishes wisely between the image and its object, between the use of images and their abuse. It vindicates all worship to God and Christ alone; but allows religious images, at the same time, as representations of Christian art, and helps to devotion in the way of calling into lively recollection the saints

and their virtues, and exciting pious imitation.* In like manner, Luther and his Church held themselves equally aloof, from Romanist image worship and Carlostadt's image demolition. — Again, scholasticism and mysticism are both equally right and wrong; only as completed by each other, do they become fully true. The best theology is that in which the clearest understanding and deepest feeling appear harmoniously interfused. In the apostle Paul, Augustine, Anselm of Canterbury, Hugo of St. Victor, Bonaventura, Luther, Melancthon, John Gerhard, J. A. Benge!, Schleiermacher, and others, we find in fact both tendencies, though in very different ways, more or less united. — In the controversy between Lutheran orthodoxy and Pietism, the venerable J. A. Bengel asserted the right medium; insisting on the union of practical piety with a firm adhesion to the established church doctrines, and opposing thus, with like decision, dead school divinity and mere religious subjectivism, that must ever become rationalistic in the end. Finally, we may say also, that the grand leading phases of church historical development, Catholicism and Protestantism, do not, separately taken, exhibit the *full* compass of Christian truth; and we look for this accordingly, with earnest longing, to a higher stadium of development, when error shall be effectually surmounted on both sides, and the divine element comprehended in each, appear happily preserved and perfected, in a higher form of church life, that shall be neither the one nor the other; a consummation, already anticipated and prefigured, we may say, in some single characters, that for instance of Augustine, and more especially in the circle of the apostles. The realization of this evangelical Catholicity or churchly Protestantism, forms more and more clearly the great problem of the present age.

This right middle, of which the old word holds good, *Medium tenere beati,* is removed heaven-wide from a characterless halting between two opinions, or from that loose eclecticism, which throws heterogeneous elements together, and then dignifies the undigested mish-mash with the name of a system. Such a middle must be pronounced rather something worse than the extremes it seeks to avoid; since it lacks courage and energy to attack itself decidedly either to the one or the other.

6. Every stage of development has its own corresponding *disease.* That the process should pass through diseases, might be presumed even from the analogy of our natural existence; it results with necessity from the elements of sin and error that still cleave to the Church in her militant state, as well as from her connexion with the degenerate world whose influence she is made continually to feel. These diseases form the antichristian power in the Church, which also has a development of its own. Along with the wheat grow the tares till the last judgment, when both shall be separated, the first gathered into the heavenly granary, the other consigned to hell-fire.

- Libri Carol. III. c. 16: Nam dum nos nihil in imagnibus spernamus præter adorationem, quippe qui in basilicis sanctorum imagines non ad adorandum, sed ad memoriam rerum gestarum et venustatem parietum habere permittimus, etc.

As every stage in the life of the individual has its *peculiar* derangements and dangers, so also has each life-period of the Church; and the more advanced any stage of development may be, the more dangerous will be also the disease to which it is exposed.
The secularized tyrannical papacy is a diseased excrescence or swelled tumour of Catholicism. Rationalistic and sectaristic pseudo-protestantism is a distortion of the original spirit of the Reformation. Both diseases form a revelation of the mystery of iniquity, an apostasy, it may be said, a manifestation of the man of sin, who exalteth himself in the temple of God and exhibits himself as God. The last is the case particularly with the logical pantheism of the latest German philosophy and anti-theology, which claims to be the most perfect birth of the Reformation itself. While the pope acknowledges the existence of a personal God, and the fundamental doctrines of the gospel in general, and professes to derive his power by apostolical succession from Christ; this false Protestantism of the school of Hegel and Strauss sets aside the divine personality altogether, and raises the idea of humanity to the throne of the world; so that all theology or christology are made to lose themselves in mere anthropology.—The opposers of Puseyism in our own country, at the present time, are but too often chargeable with the great fault of forgetting, over the mote in a brother's eye, the beam that is in their own, unwittingly helping in this way the enemy they oppose.—We ought to acknowledge and love Christ always, wherever and in whatever form he may appear. So also, we ought to contend against Antichrist in all places; and he is to be found assuredly in all Christian confessions. Where God builds a temple, the devil is sure to have a chapel alongside.

7. These diseases however attending the development of the church, prove in the hand of an all-wise God, who in the end rules all for his own glory, the *negative conditions* precisely of her *progress.* Want and help, are closely joined together. With the consciousness of disease, awakes also the desire for improvement. The physician is called, and the fever remedies are thankfully received. When the church is thus brought to thorough repentance for her sin, and the proper means of cure are employed, her original life returns again more fresh and vigorous than ever before; as the natural body, after having surmounted the diseases of early life, goes on to unfold itself subsequently with increased strength. The storm makes way for a purer atmosphere and more genial sun. So it was in the 16th century. The Reformation was conditioned historically throughout, by the shocking abuses of the papacy; and the fire was immediately kindled, as we know, by the shameless traffic in indulgences as carried on by Tetzel. In our own time, pseudo-protestantism tends to awaken a strong church feeling, and so to break the way for a new tendency. The horrid trumpet government of Rome, when the highest ecclesiastical dignity had become the play-ball of avarice and lust, called forth the Hildebrandic reform, which rescued the church from slavery, and carried the idea of the papacy to its world-historical completion. The degeneracy of the works in the 9th and 10th centuries, when the ancient discipline had yielded to all sorts of libertinism, and the abbeys were occupied almost entirely by avaricious laymen, served

powerfully to assist the reformation which issued from the convent of Clugny; a reformation, that fell back once more to the strictness of the Benedictine rule, and carried the monastic institution forward to its highest and last stage of development, as presented in the mighty orders of the 11th and 12th centuries. Thus does God, in his infinite wisdom, bring good out of all evil, and turn the purposes and plans of his foes to the benefit of his children.

8. The starting points of new stages of development, or the epochs that unfold themselves into periods, carry, according to the want of the time, the character prevailing, either of *restoration,* or *revolution,* or *reformation;* of which three forms of change, the last must be considered the highest and most influential. By *restoration,* we understand the simple re-establishment of a state which has existed before without any advance. It takes place commonly after a violent revolution. History revenges the wrongs she has been made to suffer, by falling back once more to the earlier position from which she had been forcibly expelled. Here belongs, in the political sphere, the restoration of the Bourbons, after the fall of Napoleon; in the religious, the restoration of the Church at Stuartism under the English episcopal Church, after the Puritan revolution. Puseyism and old Lutheranism in our day, are to be placed essentially in the same catalogue. Such a tendency however can maintain itself ordinarily only for a short time, and calls forth new reactions. Thus the hour of the Bourbons struck already in the year 1830; and the Romanizing Stuarts were required soon to yield to a new Protestant succession. Puseyism, as such, will hardly be able to endure long; its more consistent leaders, completing their own principle, will pass over to Newman, and a number of the English clergy, with Newman at their head, have quite recently done already so; others will fall back to the ordinary high church stand-point.

Revolution is the unsparing violent overthrow of what is at hand. It bears accordingly a character, that is prevailingly negative and destructive. It becomes historically legitimate, only where a diseased political or ecclesiastical condition has grown so inveterate, as to defy all proper means of ordinary quiet and regular improvement. In such circumstances, revolution is like a terrible thunder storm, that purifies the air. As examples from political history, we may mention the French Revolution of the preceding century, and the emancipation of the United States from the dominion of Great Britain. The last, however, has a much more regular, worthy, and historical character, than the other, and approaches rather the conception of a reformation; while the first produced the most horrible fruits of political fanaticism, and was followed thus with no stability in its results. From church history, we notice the courses pursued by Carlostadt and the Anabaptists at the time of the reformation, and the Puritanism of England in the century following; which overturned the entire constitution and worship of the English church, and thrust the spiritual and civil authorities quite aside. At the same time, Puritanism carries with it a grand character, and has left deep traces of its power; inasmuch as it held fast all the fundamental truths of the gospel, and proceeded from a fiery zeal, though not according to full knowledge, for the honour of God and his word, partaking in this way of the nature of a reformation. In the history of German

theology, we have an example of unbelieving revolution, in Rationalism. To the same category belongs the movement of Ronge, now making so much noise, the moral value of which has been so blindly exaggerated by our protestant press.

Revolution is in its own nature something unnatural, which, especially when it springs from unbelief, cannot last long. The less it may have been the result of historical necessity; the less care it may have shown to distinguish between the good and the bad in the previous order of things; the more it has cast away truth along with error; it must ever come the more rapidly to nothing, and fall the more certainly into the same contempt with posterity which it has itself exercised towards previous time. Where it is possible to reform in a legal and regular way, revolution must be abhorred as godless.

In the midst, between restoration and revolution, stands *reformation;* the improvement and productive advancement of what is at hand; or such an overthrow of the old, as is its fulfilment, by raising its truth to a higher position. A reformation includes in itself both restorational and revolutionary elements, and the organic union of these, through the force of a positive life principle, is that precisely which constitutes its peculiarity. It strikes root backwards always, in the first place, in an earlier flourishing state of the church, above all the age of the apostles, so as to reproduce its life. Thus the Reformers of the 16th century betook themselves to the sacred scriptures and the church fathers, particularly Augustine, and re-asserted the primitive doctrines and practices that had been gradually thrust aside by popery; as, for instance, the universal priesthood, the use of the cup for the laity, the right of the people to choose their preacher, to read the Bible in their own tongue, &c. On the other side, they rejected all ordinances and institutions of the Roman church, which were opposed to the scriptures, such as the papacy, the Pelagian merit of good works, indulgences, monkery, the doctrine of transubstantiation, purgatory, &c. In the Reformed church of Switzerland, France, and Scotland, this revolutionary element showed itself more powerfully than in the Lutheran and Anglican, and remodelled accordingly the whole life of Roman Catholicism, in a more radical way, after the supposed pattern of the scriptures. John Knox in particular was already a puritan in principle. But notwithstanding this, the Reformed church grew with historical necessity out of Catholicism, and served to fulfil the deep longing of the Middle Ages after evangelical freedom. Reformatory also, though in a different direction, was the activity of Gregory the Great, and Hildebrand, in the sphere of church government; that of Benedict, Odo, Francis of Assisi, in the history of monasticism; that of Augustine, Anselm, Schleiermacher, in theology; and that of Spener, Francke, Zinzendorf, Wesley, in the sphere of practical piety.

To the age in which a reformatory movement has place, it appears always to be revolutionary, and is denounced as schism or heresy. Public opinion is against it; though it meets directly, on the other hand, the deepest wants of time, and is sure accordingly to triumph in the end. So was it indeed even with the Lord himself and his apostles, who were persecuted by public opinion even to death. When Luther came forward, he had the highest

spiritual and civil powers against him. That his work prevailed notwithstanding, shows its uncompromising necessity. The violent opposition it has afterwards against Spener is known; still Pietism carried the day, since it had its ground in the wants of the Lutheran church at the time. The necessity of a reformation of the Protestant church is making itself more and more felt in our own time. Our circumstances are defective enough to call for an improvement, both in head and branch; but not so desperate, on the other hand, that they need to be assailed in a violent, radical way. Rather the defects, are of a negative sort; so that restorational action should prevail, in the case, over the revolutionary. What is first of all needed, is a more thorough apprehension of the original stand-point of the reformation of the 16th century, from which a large part of the Protestant church has notoriously fallen away; then a living regress also to the earlier history of the church, and especially to her covenant archives, the sacred scriptures. Only from this objective positive ground, is it possible to combat successfully the reigning evils, so as to advance to a new and higher position.

9. Reformatory movements are characterized by having at their head *great religious personalities,* which have become filled and ruled, in mind and heart, by the power of a deep religious idea. History proceeds aristocratically. Talk as we may of the sovereignly and self-government of the people, the first impulse of great events springs almost always from prominent individuals, in whom the spirit of the age as it were becomes flesh, and whom the mass of other men follow by a sort of spiritual instinct. These master spirits, if they are truly to carry the church forward, must be animated with deep moral earnestness, must have gone through much spiritual conflict in their own souls, and wrestled with all their might to secure salvation in the church they are called to reform. Only one who has learned, by thorough study and practical experiment, to understand a system, and judge correctly of its advantages as well as its faults, is prepared to overcome it and carry it beyond itself. Think only of the apostle Paul. He had been honestly zealous for the law of his fathers, and had fully mastered the rabbinical theology of his day. For this very reason, he was the most powerful and successful opponent of pharisaic Judaism. Augustine wrestled as a Manichean, to solve the deep mystery of evil, and to find peace for his own anxious soul: and it was this precisely that qualified him to overcome scientifically the errors of that heretical system. Luther did not set out against the Roman Catholic church with ridicule and abuse: but as one of the most conscientious among monks, he laboured to secure the sanctification of his nature in her bosom, bore willingly and humbly her legal burdens, and even after he came to a better knowledge of the truth, felt it a heavy task still to renounce in full his connexion with the pope. It is just this that authenticates his call to be a reformer. *Ullman,* in his interesting "Thoughts of the German Catholic movement," doubts with full right *Ronge's* capacity to be a reformer, on the ground of his being so easily done with the Roman Catholic system, system, clearly without having himself gone through its system of moral discipline. "Whoever," says Ullmann beautifully,* "may be called by a truly divine mission, to make a passage in history, and to assist in the production of something new, it is necessary that he

should himself in the first place have had an inward religious history, have passed through a momentous, rich, peculiar, life-process, in the way as it were of pattern for others. This has appeared to us to be essentially wanting, in this German Catholic movement. Men, such as we are accustomed to find at the head of church creations; men, full of deep, holy, earnestness; full of experimental, living, rock-firm faith; devoted in humility and self-forgetfulness to the will and purpose of God; standing at the head of their age, not simply in their Christian life, but in all its more important and influential forms of culture; who have wrestled with themselves in the sweat of their brow, and then after coming to solid divine rest in their own spirits, are found standing forth in sharp opposition to the errors of their time; carried by the true, deeper spirit of the age, but yet in conflict with the false, as it moves on the mere surface of life: — *such* men, like many of the great teachers of Christian antiquity and the middle ages, like our German and Swiss reformers, like some of the later founders too of smaller Christian societies, have not here presented themselves to our view."

10. The main stream of development, though full of turns, moves always *forwards.* We say purposely the *mainstream;* which was formed first by the Greek Roman universal church; then by the Romano-Germanic Catholicism; and since the Reformation appears in evangelical Protestantism. Along with this there are side-currents that may dry away entirely. Thus we find sects which having: fulfilled their historical call, without uniting themselves afterwards with the general life of the church, are as it were turned into stone; the *Dunkards,* for instance, whose religion now consists in their long beards and their opposition to call culture and civilization. Large churches also, that once formed the main stream of history, may sunder themselves from the historical movement, and then stagnate and waste away in dead formalism. This is the case with the Greek church since its separation from the West, and with those sections of the Roman Church since the Reformation that stand in no connexion whatever with Protestantism.

With this restriction now we affirm an uninterrupted progress in the history of the church. As soon as we are set free from the cheerless view, that takes history to be the product of mere human activity, without the living intervention of the almighty love and wisdom of God himself, we must necessarily come to this idea of a progressive movement The idea of a divine providence and government of the world if only we be in earnest with it, requires a steady advance towards the latter. God has proposed for his kingdom upon the earth, a definite end. If so, however, all history must look and move this way. It would imply, either that God is not almighty, or that he deals not seriously wath men, to suppose that the church is not always in fact coming never to this end, or that it is never to be reached. The revelation of God under the Old Testament exhibits to our view an analogous progress; commencing with the faint germ-like promise of the serpent bruiser, immediately after the fall;

- Studien und Kritiken. Jahrgang, 1845. Heft. 4. S. 1013.

advancing to more distinct announcements of the blessing for all nations, that should spring from Abraham's seed, in the patriarchal period; then to the more magnificent representation of the Messianic salvation, by the greater and smaller prophets; till all becomes complete at last in the palpable testimony of the Baptist, pointing to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world. Not only in knowledge, but In the religious life also we can trace, on the part of ancient Israel, such a progressive development. First, the child-like piety of the patriarchs; then the manly, earnest discipline of the law; afterwards, the almost evangelical joy of Isaiah, in the consciousness of an approaching deliverance from the curse; finally, the sum and culmination of all preceding revelations, the union of the severity of the law and the consolation of prophecy, in the person of John the Baptist with whom the Old Testament comes to its close. The history of God's ancient people, however, is a type of the Christian church. Hence, this too, is carried through a similar, though far higher development, always advancing towards the point, when she shall be ripe to receive the Lord at his second coming in glory. The history of the individual believer, finally, goes to confirm this view. He advances, in fact, nobly in his bodily life, but in that of the spirit also; his history is a growth in grace, from repentance to faith, from one measure of knowledge and holiness to another, till he is brought to see God face to face, and is made free from all sin and death.

It is true now indeed, that the Rationalists also talk much of an ever-advancing "Aufklärung" of humanity, in their sense. But they mean by this, an advance beyond Christ and the Bible. Every such conception we decidedly reject; and affirm, rather, that this would be no advance, but a relapse only to Paganism and Judaism. According to our view, on the contrary, Christ is the alpha and omega, the beginning and the end, and all true progress, as we have before remarked, consists simply, in a more full appropriation continually of his divine human life, and a deeper understanding of his word, which is the absolute truth and eternal life itself.

It would be a misunderstanding again, if this theory were supposed to imply that the personalities of a later stage of development must be greater than those of an earlier stage. Rather the case may be precisely opposite. We allow, for instance, without hesitation, that our present Protestantism has no such profound, spiritually productive spirits, no such grand self-renouncing characters, to show, as the Middle Ages or the period of the Reformation. It is just at the head of an epoch, that we meet with personal forms transcending all that belong to its subsequent course; which implies simply that the real instances of the new life principle to particular instances and relations, in the way of detail, and of course does not require the same spiritual power. We maintain only, that the stand-point, the principle, of a later time, surpasses that of an earlier period; or that a new element at least is made to come forward in it, which had not previously been apprehended with clear consciousness, but at most was present only in an implicit way. We may apply here the word of our Lord in relation to John the Baptist: "Among them that are born of women, there hath not risen one that is greater; and yet the least in the kingdom of God is greater than he." This does not mean plainly, that

the person even of the smallest Christian was to be counted superior to that of John; for this would not suit the first part of the declaration. It is the stand-point of one dispensation that is compared with that of the other; in such a way as to affirm the endless superiority of the second over the first.

Particular periods, however, may be held up to our view, that seem wholly at variance with our affirmation; periods in which religious life has almost entirely failed, and dark superstition, or daring unbelief, or both perhaps together, have reigned supreme in the Church. Such was the fifteenth century, emphatically designated dark; also the eighteenth, in which rationalism and religious indifference took possession of almost every Protestant land. But here we refer to our previous exposition, in which we have shown that the development before us is carried forward through diseases, that cause the vital energy to give way at times for a season; only, however, that it may afterwards, as soon as the disease has been overcome, display itself again more actively than before. Just before creative epochs in particular, there is usually a falling away, in which old truths, forms and usages, are torn down, to make room for a new structure. These are transitional periods accordingly, which are also necessary in order to progress. Compared merely with the previous state, they form a deterioration; but still they are nearer the redemption of a new epoch, and in this respect higher, as viewed in connexion with the subsequent course of history.

Finally, we may be referred to our Lord's prediction concerning the moral state of the world at his second coming, (Matt. xxiv. 37—39,) and to other similar passages, that foretell an increase of corruption, as militating against our view. But we have already shown, that along with the kingdom of Christ, the kingdom of Antichrist also is steadily advancing to its completion, in the opposite way. The tares grow towards full ripeness, as well as the wheat in the midst of which they stand; but only to be cast in the end into the fire and burned, while the last is gathered into the store-house of eternal life.

- Comp. the excellent remarks of Dr. Nevin, in his Introduction to the "Principle of Protestantism," p. 21, sq.: "Assuredly those who hold the idea of historical progress, with any proper knowledge, do not conceive of it as a continuous movement, under the same form, in the same direction. They mean by it only a movement, whose general, ultimate tendency is forwards and not backwards; and which, though it may seem at times to be differently turned, is still found in the end steadily recovering and pursuing its original course; as a stream of water, carried aside, or pressed back upon itself, by some obstruction, does but force for itself a more circuitous way, or only gather strength to burst or overflow the barrier, that so it may roll onward as before. Truth can be said to advance, only as error is surmounted and thrown into its rear. But this requires that the error should always in the first place, make itself known and felt. A position in which the elements of a still latent error are included, is of course less advanced than a position, which has been gained by overcoming the same error after it has come to light; and as this can be reached only through the manifestation of the error, we may say that the intermediate stage itself in which such manifestation takes place, though it may seem to be a falling away as compared with the period before, is nevertheless also an onward movement in fact."

The more advanced the state to which the Church may have come, the more dangerous will be found the power of the world with which she is called to contend. Partly, because the world itself appropriates what Christianity has won in the way of culture, in order to employ it by abuse against the Church; and partly, because the prince of darkness may be expected of course to increase the vigour of his assaults, in proportion to the vigour with which he is withstood. Thus, for example, the popish errors and abuses were a worse enemy to the cause of Christ, than pagan Rome with all its persecutions; and Protestant infidelity, as it has been systematically perfected, especially in connexion with the German theology, is more dangerous again, and more profoundly and directly opposed to the truth, than all the superstition of the Roman Catholic church at the time of the Reformation.

11. The last feature of the development of the Church which we shall mention, is found in its geographical course. This proceeds in general, like that of the sun, from east to west. The cradle of Christianity, as also of history and cultivation generally, is the orient; and in particular that remarkable land, which by its central relation to three quarters of the globe, has been found so peculiarly fitted to be the birth-place of a universal religion. But even in the time of the apostles, the gospel passed over from Palestine to Asia Minor, Greece and Italy. In the centuries next following, the Greek Church held the rudder of Church History. She fulfilled especially, by means of her philosophic culture, the momentous task of unfolding the objective, fundamental doctrines, of the trinity, the divine incarnation, and the two natures in the God-man. During this period, the rise of the Latin Church took place, from the time of Tertullian, in Africa. In Augustine, who may be regarded as the reproduction of Tertullian's spirit under a higher and more perfect form, the philosophical acumen and theological depth of the Grecian mind were united with the practical tendency of the West. He brought out in the controversy with Pelagius, the subjective anthropological dogmas of human freedom and the work of grace. His boundless spiritual wealth, and noble greatness of heart, fell as an inheritance to the Latin Church. This now fixed its centre for centuries, in the world metropolis; whose bishop gradually raised himself from the rank of co-ordinate patriarchs to that of universal Christian pope; while the Greek Church in time, separated from the West, lost all its historical significance and weight. Meanwhile, from Rome as a centre, the Germanic nations of the north of Europe and the Anglo-Saxons of the British Islands, were Christianized, the arts and sciences advanced, the idea formed of catholicity that should embrace all lands and pervade all relations, and the unity and independence of the Church triumphantly defended against the particular, secular interests of single States. Towards the close of the Middle Ages, the spiritual strength of the Church appears already in the progress of transplantation from its old seat. France and the university of Paris, became the central ground of theology. The celebrated chancellor of this university, John Gerson, it is well known, Nicholas of Clamenge and Peter d'Alliaco, exerted the most important influence, with their liberal principles, on the great reformatory councils of the fifteenth century. With the Reformation of the century following,

Germany became the birth-place of a new epoch in Church history, and Wittenberg is made to take the place of Paris. The power of the papacy, in the feudal system of former times, is broken in its principle, and its historical importance henceforward, which is by no means lost, comes to rest mainly upon its antagonism to the new creation, by which it has been thrown into the shade. Protestantism shakes the whole vast structure of the Roman Church, and in particular gains possession of that wonderful island also, that is to succeed Rome, and the Romano-Germanic empire, in the supremacy of the world. Whilst Protestant theology still finds its congenial home in Germany, the heart of Europe, England on the other hand represents the political world-force of the evangelical Church, by a dominion on which the sun never sets.

From England and Scotland mainly, the northern half of the new world has been settled. The United States of America are essentially a Protestant land; as in language and manners, so also in religion and church life, the daughter of Great Britain. They are in an eminent sense the land of the future. It is pleasing, and natural at the same time, to look upon this free and friendly asylum for all pilgrims from Europe, now growing old and weary of life, as the main theatre of world and church history in time to come. From this country again perhaps, when its civilization shall reach Oregon, may proceed principally the evangelization of China and India, still bearing the gospel westward in its sun-like course; till finally it shall return, with the millennium and the coming of the Lord in his glory, to the point from which it started on its circuit round the globe. At present, we lie in the birth throes of a new creation. All still rolls in wild confusion. But the time is not far, when the divine word shall sound, *Let there be light!* and a beautiful world shall rise from the midst of the struggling chaos. As the church of the Future is called to take up into herself the truth of all previous development, and to be thus the proper sum of all Church History, it is quite in order that all the divisions of Protestantism should be represented in our land, and Catholicism too as a sort of counterpoise to any extreme on the opposite side. This imparts to our religious condition an aspect of disorder, and constitutes our free land an arena of violent ecclesiastical conflict, on which the European is inclined to look down with a compassionate smile. But such wild fermentation always characterizes the transition periods that go before a reformation; and the more manifold and mighty the conflicting elements may be, the more rich must the result prove to which they ultimately give birth. May our American church soon come to the consciousness of this her great calling; subordinate her sectarian activities to the general interest that lies far beyond that of any single existing denomination; assume in this struggle towards a better future, the genuine historical stand-point; and never forget, at the same time, what she owes to the old world, not excepting the still so much misunderstood and reviled German theology, from whose ideas in the end the whole Protestantism lives and thrives, nor how much she ought still to learn from the history of her fathers.

Section 3.

Practical Importance of a Right View of Church History.

Such in general are the laws and conditions that rule the development of the kingdom of God in the world. The correctness of our view can be fully established only by an actual representation of Church History itself; a work that is worthy to engross a whole life. It devolves upon us now, to present some practical observations, that flow from the whole subject. Truth, so far as it has life, is never simply theoretic, but includes always a bearing also on practice. Our beloved America has especially the great merit of at once turning all thoughts into flesh and blood, life and deed. The practical consequences of any theory, form the best test of its truth, according to the old maxim, "By their fruits ye shall know them." The foregoing view of history, it is believed, has no reason to shrink from the test; as we shall now attempt to show.

The study of history in general has its use at large in this, that it promotes a proper understanding of the present, and serves thus to secure efficiency and success to the labours which have respect to the future. Only such points, however, as follow with necessity from the peculiar theory of Church History, which has now been exhibited, will here be brought into notice.

1. This view first inspires us with a genuine living interest in the study of *Church History.* It is regarded as the evolution of God's plan of redemption, proceeding according to rational and necessary laws. All that it includes, is bound together in a living way. Nothing comes too soon, and nothing too late. Every period possesses its own peculiar greatness, its imperishable worth, and is entitled to our attention and admiration. Every great and truly considerable manifestation has indeed a mortal body, but reveals also an undying soul, and positively or negatively, with will or without it, must ever issue in the glory of God and the salvation of the Church. Such a spectacle, whether in a scientific or religious point of view, cannot fail to be in a high degree attractive. We may well say indeed, that history must become in this way a study of the first interest, a fountain of the richest spiritual enjoyment and instruction. The mighty dead, who have died in the Lord, rise from their dust, and move before us, clothed in flesh and blood, as though they belonged to our own time. Like the different tones of a glorious anthem, they hymn the praise of their Redeemer, in whose blood they have washed their garments white. Every one has a word to say to us, in the way of consolation, exhortation, animation. Every one becomes to us a lively monument of God's mercy and truth. We feel ourselves happy and at home, in their society. The wonderful riddle of the communion of the saints, comprehending heaven and earth, eternity and time, is

solved; and we fall down in adoration before him, who has caused his grace to abound, under such manifold forms, in all Christian lands, and nations, and times.

How all is changed, when history is viewed as a mere outward conglomeration of facts, numbers and names, that are held together by no living principle, and etherialized by no everlasting thought. In such an atomistic heap no interest can be taken, unless by one who uses mechanically his memory only, without thought. What attraction can be found, for instance, in the study of the middle ages, where one has his head crammed full beforehand with the prejudice, that darkness and corruption only, hatred to the truth and hostility to all true religion, ruled throughout this whole period the Catholic Church? It were much better, certainly, in such a case, to be employed with other things entirely, that might be expected to refresh and edify the spirit; and it is not strange accordingly, that so few of our Protestant theologians, in consequence of such prejudice, which has wrought itself into the character of a stiff tradition, should be found to possess even a tolerable acquaintance with the school divinity, mysticism, and other forms of spiritual grandeur, belonging to the mediæval church.

2. A second practical fruit of the theory, is found in the *satisfaction* and *comfort,* which the idea of an ever advancing development of the Church imparts to the mind, in looking at the past and present. The rationalistic imagination, that history at last is but a tangled web of human passions, a fruitless contest for words and systems, is well suited to lead an earnest spirit to despair. And certainly the view of many who count themselves orthodox, is not much better; according to which, during certain centuries at least, God has as it were withdrawn himself from the stage, and abandoned humanity wholly to itself; so that whole vast periods, in particular the middle ages, are to be set down as times of pure deterioration, spiritually void and waste, a moral blank at best, or horrible yawning chasm; by which the present, instead of being joined with the past, is only sundered from it, and that must be overleaped entirely, in order that all things may go forward again as by a fresh, original, start. Appalling imagination, if it only were fairly and solemnly laid to heart! It turns, not only the fallen world as such, but the new creation in Christ also, who is the principle of all order and life, into a formless chaos! The doctrine of an all-comprehending divine Providence, in which we live and move and have our being, affirmed by the Bible and all Christian experience, it completely overturns.

According to our view, on the other hand, Church History presents on every one of its pages, an impressive confirmation of the truth of our Lord's precious promise: "Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world!" and constitutes thus one of the most powerful arguments for the divine origin of Christianity. On one who is able thus to discern the footsteps of the Lord in the Church, as a power that has bid defiance to the gates of hell in all ages, no impression will be made against the gospel by any objections, however plausible they may appear. The overwhelming might of history, has already long since demolished them in the way of fact. Such a one can look also with confidence and comfort, towards the present and future. Confused as may be the first, and dark as may be the second, the past still

gives him the assurance that the omnipotent head of Zion will unravel the confusion and cause the darkness to become light, and to bring his most frantic enemies to bow at his feet.

The man, who in the midst of such a heaving, tumultuating time as our own, for instance, is found resting on his own mere private judgment, or that of his party, has under him the most unstable ground, and cannot come to any true and solid quiet in his own spirit at the last. Our nature involves in itself a demand for communion with the general and universal, that must sooner or later, in every such case, make itself painfully felt. The subjectivity, that affects to carry itself high towards objective history, closes its ear against the voice of centuries, and retires self-sufficient into its own poor and narrow life, is deserving of contempt, or at least compassion. We will bear in mind that Christianity, in its very nature, seeks communion. We will cherish sympathy then with the whole family of Christian nations, and feel our own heart's blood in the veins of every century. We will make the gain of history, true mistress of experience, to become our own. Thus have we a solid rock, on which to rest secure. And when we know not, as we gaze into the future, what is to be done, in order to help the hurt of Israel and loose the bands of Zion, we are still not disconcerted. A thousand examples teach us that it is not we that make history, but history that makes us. There moves in the whole onward course of time a spirit of infinite wisdom and love, in whose hand we are simple instruments. The general reigns over the single. This objective force of history will, at the proper season, bring the right remedy; and it belongs to us only to follow freely the working of the divine Spirit, and obediently to execute his commands. When Luther posted his 95 theses on the castle-church at Wittemberg, he had no presentiment what consequences this seemingly unimportant event would draw in its train. Most innocently, we may say, did he become a reformer. The force of history bore him forward from one act to another, and before he himself dreamed of it, the church had taken another form. Only such a creation on the part of the individual, as is at the same time a creation wrought by history through him, can have any permanent stability. A purely subjective fabrication, however skilfully and vigorously framed, goes quickly as it comes. The presumptuous spirits that bark against her, history hurls unmercifully to the ground, and proceeds in triumph over the golgotha of their impotent deeds. Luther's work still stands; because it was called forth by the necessity of history. The artificial effort of Julian, the apostate, to restore Judaism to life, went to ruin with its author, with the tragic cry: Galilaeus vicisti! The English "Book of Common Prayer," which gathered into itself, with reverential affection, the liturgical creations of the ancient church, continues to this day a rich source of edification and the pride of the Episcopal Church; while the numerous liturgies and hymn-books of Rationalism and unhistorical Protestantism generally, have been able to maintain themselves only for a short time. The German Churches in this country might have spared themselves the trouble of manufacturing so many new liturgies and hymn-books, had they but respected more the treasures of the primitive Church and the Reformation.—This leads us to another point, which we will notice separately.

3. It is only the conservative historical standpoint that can authorize any right *satisfaction in our own work.* Unbelieving Rationalism and believing Puritanism alike, with their revolutionary attitude towards history, have properly no right whatever to expect that they shall be regarded and loved by those who come after them. He that despises his spiritual ancestry, should reckon upon no grateful posterity. If the work of whole *centuries* has been vain, so that there is nothing better than to extirpate it root and branch, how should *we* then be able to bring any thing permanent to pass? Are we formed of higher material than our predecessors? Are we not men, even as they were? It is a ridiculous, if not wicked, presumption, for any one to exalt his own individuality, as such, over the authority of all history.

The man, on the other hand, who knows how to join the royal rights of freedom, as they are included in the very idea of personality wherever found, with due reverence for authority, may calculate that to him also the tribute of free respect and love will be paid in time to come. He that holds the works of the past in honour, and attaches himself with self-renouncing love to existing relations, holding fast in them what is of divine right, and correcting their defects with wise forbearance, has ground to hope that his own work too, appointed of God, will leave behind it some benefit for following generations. Robespierre and Danton are branded names. Voltaire, Bahrdt and Bruno Bauer, are mentioned with horror. Thomas Münzer has become as a spectral dream. Even men like Carlstadt and Cromwell, though of a much higher nature, on account of their wild, stormful behaviour towards the work of their fathers, enjoy but a very qualified respect in a small circle. But the men of reverence, that holy power which exalts the man while it causes him to bow—an Augustine, Anselm, Thomas a Kempis, Luther, Melancthon, Calvin, Leighton, Spener, Zinzendorf, J. A. Bengel—rise from their centuries like light-towers for all times, and will continue to live in blessed remembrance with the Church for ever.

4. The modern German view of history tends to overthrow all *narrow party spirit* and *intolerant party zeal.* What rashness it is, to bind the Spirit of God to a fixed form and party! Only too often, however, do we find this done. Especially also in the war against the Church of Rome. How many forget, over the dross of this system, the gold of catholicity still contained in it, which is much older than popery. We must maintain for this Church a historical respect, and may not consent for any price, that on account of its great and terrible errors, the evangelical truths also which are among them, and which we too hold, should be assailed with profane hand. Under the influence of such blind zeal, that casts away the wheat with the chaff, the mind shrinks within itself more and more, and loses all capacity for development. With the mind, at the same time, the heart and character are also contracted. Love and humanity die, and dark intolerance, a fanatical persecuting temper, takes full possession of the soul.

With our principle of history, on the contrary, we remain open continually to humiliation, encouragement, instruction, enlargement of every sort. We gather with fond affection the

flowers of the Christian life, out of all times and generations, and adorn with them our own altars. Nihil humani, et multo magis nihil Christiani, a me alienum puto, is our watchword; sympathy with all that is great, and noble, and beautiful, though under a rough shell, our high and cherished enjoyment. We seek to stand in living communion with the saints of all centuries, of whatever tongue or confession, and however much the form of their piety also may differ from ours. In a common garden we find various flowers, and it is the intermingling of all sorts of hues and odours, precisely that serves most to regale the senses. And shall the Church, the garden of the Lord, be characterized by tedious, monotonous uniformity?

We are ready thus to turn to account, in our own Church activity, all the treasures that history brings within our reach; even though derived in part from the so called dark ages themselves. Let us leave to the papists the spirit of uncharitable intolerance; we will count it our honour to admit instruction, though with self-denial, even from them. Let us leave to the Seceders and Alt-lutheraner the fancy, that they alone are the elect, possessed of the pure and perfect doctrine of Christ. We envy them not their principle of stagnation and their self-sufficiency. With the apostle Paul, we hold that we have not yet attained the whole of Christianity, nor become perfect; and forgetting what lies behind, we reach joyfully after that which is before, towards the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

5. Closely connected with what has just been said, is the last and most important point to be presented. I mean, the bearing of this view of Church History on the great work of Christian Union. The Church of Christ, and in particular the Protestant Church in our own country, is at present deplorably divided, the professors of the same faith are so filled with envy and jealousy, and so sadly estranged from one another, by bitter, uncharitable, sectarian feuds, that even those who have the least church feeling begin at last to see the evil; and, God be praised, thousands are brought to sigh after a permanent deliverance from such vast curse. While Rome triumphs maliciously over our divisions, and some are urged, in despair of the future, and dazzled with the show of unity exhibited by this corrupt Church, to forsake the ranks of Protestantism and throw themselves into her bosom; we have various plans proposed among ourselves for a union of our scattered strength; and in August of the present year a grand universal Protestant council is to be held in London with reference to this very object, in prosecution of steps already taken by the convention of last year at Liverpool. We will not suffer ourselves to be deceived, however, with this fair talk of union. We acknowledge with joy indeed the right feeling that lies at the ground of these movements. They show a painful sense of the wrong state of the Church at the present time, and a desire for something better. They are a practical testimony furnished by the conscience of the Church against the great evil of sects, which some are so ready to extenuate and excuse theoretically. But, notwithstanding all this, we must enter our decided dissent from the general movement. Many appear to wish a union of Protestants, only in order to a more successful conflict with the power of Rome. This is to sink the interest to a mere instrument,

in the service too of a party motive. But it should be remembered, that church unity is not a means simply for something else, but an end in itself; which requires to be sought accordingly for its own sake. We should long for it, and struggle to reach it, as the object for which our Lord himself so solemnly prayed, when about to leave the world. We should seek to realize it, because it is involved in the very conception of the Church as the one body of Christ, as the organic communion of saints, that it should be united. So far as it is divided, it falls short of its own idea, in its actual form among men.

And then, it is besides an altogether too contracted conception of union, to confine it exclusively to the Protestant world; as though all Christianity belonged to this, and the elements of a perfect church organization were all at hand in it, as it now stands. It is surely an intolerant and narrow imagination, to regard the whole Roman and Greek communions, so far exceeding us as they do in numbers, as out of the Church entirely, and only worthy of course to be blotted out of history altogether as a gigantic spiritual zero. Thus to excommunicate the greatest part of Christendom at a single stroke, is to imitate the bigotry of Rome herself, and cast a reproach upon the whole Protestant profession. We mean not assuredly to plead the cause of Rome, as such ; atid think of no union with the false power, that involves a return to her bosom, constituted as the Church is at the present time; with the whole strength and beauty of her original catholic life infolded in the deadly coils of the papacy and wickedly refusing to acknowledge God's truth as saved by the Reformation. We go not back to that hard, iron captivity, which has been left full three hundred years behind in the onward march of the true Israel of God. But we have no right to say, that all truth and life have departed from this Church. It will yet be brought to occupy new and higher ground; or rather the truth and life which it includes be carried forwards and upwards as a constituent element at least, not simply to the present posture of Protestantism, (which no sound mind can hold to be itself complete,) but to that last best state of Christianity, in which full justice shall be done to the truth on all sides, and the Church shall appear one and universal in fact as she is now one and universal in idea. We dream of no other union. But for this we long and pray, even as we long and pray for the coming of the millennium itself; and shall be hindered from doing so by no fanatical intolerance, either on the one side or on the other.

Another defect too generally characteristic of our efforts for union, is doctrinal indifferentism and an undervaluation of history. The differences that exist among religious parties are viewed as of small account; and so to make room for union, peculiarities of doctrine are to be surrendered, for which our fathers contended and made the greatest sacrifices, as for points of vital solemnity. Whole centuries of separation are to be sunk into nothing, only to come together again at the common point of departure. The process must be from the definite to the indefinite, from the concrete and particular backwards to abstract generalities. Thus, for instance, the Apostles Creed, or some loose compilation made up of the most formal propositions, (anti-papistical in particular) from the different protestant symbols, are to represent these symbols themselves! With such a so called "United

Apostolical Protestant Confession" we have been lately favoured in fact, from a worthy and zealous leader in the cause of Christian union.* But what a full mistake it is to project a symbol before the body is formed that shall take it for its confession! It is as though one should think to speak before he has a mouth, or to walk before he has feet. What is a symbol, in its only true and proper sense? A formal representation on the part of the church, of a common living faith already at hand.* It supposes the presence of a certain form of life, in its very nature, of which it is simply the expression and transcript. The Apostles' Creed appeared long after the time of the apostles; the Augsburg Confession full three centuries after the commencement of the Lutheran Reformation; the Heidelberg Catechism, and other protestant symbols, still much later. But where now is the United Protestant church, in which Lutherans, German Reformed, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Episcopalians, Methodists, Baptists, &c., join hands fraternally in *twelve* articles of faith? It has not yet come to light; and it will not be called into being, I am afraid, by this "United, Apostolic, Protestant Confession." A church is not to be fabricated in the study, by simply extracting, and putting together in an outward way, some propositions of apparently like sound, out of different symbolical books. It comes not by the pious wish and operation of a hundred individual minds.

- "Overture for Christian Union, submitted for the consideration of the evangelical denominations in the United States;" subscribed by quite a number of distinguished names.
- We would respectfully submit to our honoured friend, *Dr. S. Schmucker,* the author of this symbol, the following words of one of the most eminent German theologians, for consideration: "True confessions again, such as are grounded in a specific, living, deep-rooted conviction, are not accustomed to make their appearance as this one, (the symbol formed by the adherents of Ronge at the council of Leipzig) has done. They start not, in their original form at least, from the joint action of many, met to discuss, and to consult and vote, and concerned to produce by suppression and concession, something that may satisfy all. Rather, in the quiet, holy depths of a soul that has passed through great trials and conflicts, a mind possessed of the power of faith and pervaded with the noblest cultivation of the time, there springs up a new, fuller, purer apprehension of Christianity; along with this faith is kindled a fire, that with contagious force lays hold also of other spirits; in common, inspiring and inspired, they break a new path of religious knowledge, a new highway of salvation; and then they give to that with which all are filled, a clear utterance also in the way of confession, to lay the ground thus of an enduring communion. Always, however, where things have their natural course, what thus becomes the word of confession for many, will be found to have been in the first place the original, full life of some prominent, spiritually mighty individual man, from whom, as a germ, the whole communion grows. But for this very reason, a new faith, a new confession, is not made; it rises, it becomes, it grows. It is not the man who has the faith, but the faith has the man, and seeks to express itself through him. And hence it follows again; first, that a system of faith, a confession, is not so quickly and easily brought to pass, but involves earnest and great spiritual toil; and secondly, that where the work proceeds properly, the contents of the system will be such, as are acknowledged to be, not something made by the man himself, ordered and settled according to his pleasure, but something divinely true, a higher power, before which he bows and prostrates himself in his inmost soul." *Ullmann.* Studien und Kritiken, 1845. Heft. 4. S. 1011 ff.

God alone can produce a union, by the objective course of history itself, which does indeed concentrate, and as it were coronalize itself, in single towering personalities; but in doing so, forms these also as organs for its service, and thrusts them forward into it as by a divine force, instead of allowing it to be fashioned according to their pleasure, or even to be anticipated by them in any way.

And what a wretched union must not that be, counted in the end, which might thus be constructed, in any case, only on the ruins of history! Have the dogmatic struggles of our ancestors then been all in vain? Has the great development of the different branches of Protestantism gone forward thus far, without meaning or fruit? After the toil of so many hundred years, must we go back again to the most indefinite beginnings, to A B C we may say, of our church life? Is it not in fact an enormous presumption, when we look at it properly, to suppose that a few men of the 19th century, in such an outward mechanical way, should succeed in bringing something permanently stable to pass, where the whole Christian past is practically charged with having laboured to no purpose?

No; if a union is to come, as we pray and hope in reliance upon Christ's promise, it will not present itself destructively towards history, but take up rather the whole contents of it into new life. Every single denomination, every Christian people, every Christian century, has something to contribute to this great result. The end then plainly requires, as the means by which it may be best reached, that the different branches of the church should be brought, by a thorough study of her history, to know and respect and love one another more; and thus come more and more clearly to the consciousness, that no one of them is perfect, but that they are mutually necessary one to the other, and should severally leave their faults behind, and unite their advantages and virtues into a harmonious whole. The exposition which we have now attempted to give of the nature of Church History, is sufficient to show its importance as regards this object. In the light in which it has been presented, it is precisely adapted to awaken and promote such a genuine catholic spirit of union as the case requires; and thus we come to the result, that a thorough knowledge of the historical development of the body of Christ, in all its parts, is an indispensable condition to the farther advancement of the church, and to the establishment of its different branches. The cultivation of Church History, and that of the church itself, go hand in hand together. Here is the strongest challenge to an unremitting prosecution of the study, for all who are called to take part in the solution of the great church questions of the present time, and who are concerned to build, not upon the sand, but upon an immoveable rock.

Finis.